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MAIDS OF HONOUR:

A TALE

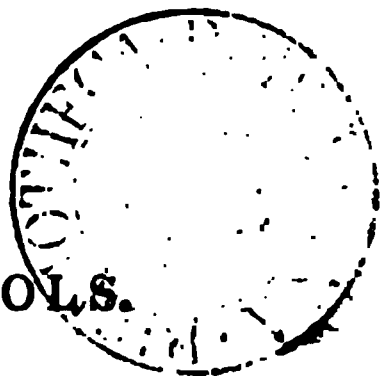
OF

THE COURT OF GEORGE I.

"One thing I have got by the long time I have been here, which is, the being more sensible than ever I was of my happiness in being *Maid of Honour*: I wont say 'God preserve me so,' neither; that would not be so well."—SUFFOLK CORRESPONDENCE.

IN THREE VOLS.

VOL. I.



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TO

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.

AUTHOR OF "PELHAM," &c. &c.

Of the fair celebrities who have given a title to these volumes, it cannot be unknown to so well read an historical scholar as yourself, that one—the true heroine of the story—has been immortalized by the praises of Pope, Gay, Churchill, Horace Walpole and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and has also had the honour of being made the subject of a little poem in the English language from the pen of Voltaire. Indeed Mary Lepel was one of those rare characters formed to be the ornament of her circle, and the boast of her age. Nor have her three fair contemporaries, with whom she is here associated, passed through

and gossiping memorandum referring to Court Beauties of the period.

The society in which they were regarded as such valuable features, though it existed in this country more than a hundred years ago, undoubtedly formed of the most extraordinary materials ever constituted a civilized community. The name of it styled *the Court*, was such a Court that I think you will readily agree with me, England has never seen before, and is not likely to behold again.

Yet in this soil, another strange sign of the very strange times, there flourished qualities the most opposite that can by any possibility be conceived; the courtly Chesterfield and the witty Addison were existing harmoniously with the brutal Wharton and the licentious Buckingham.

Never was the Hyperion and Satyr juxtaposition more conspicuous than in the various instances of this kind, that were then and there.

fill up my canvass—except now and then in a slight deviation from the exact time, and in the imaginative colouring necessary to all such illustrations—I have had continual reference to published facts and characteristics. Indeed, as respects even the royal group who figure so prominently in the foreground, if they are not such flattering likenesses as are usually found in portraits of royalty, they may be regarded with confidence, as reflecting, according to many able authorities, the features of the very remarkable originals they assume to represent; and as to the eminent literary characters that are introduced, perhaps you may think, with a more evident ambition, it should be observed that they are merely sketched in to complete the general design; in fact, they possess no pretensions beyond back-ground figures.

In dedicating to you the picture I have here delineated of this unique Court, and of the very singular state of society of which the Court circle may be said to have formed the head, I am conscious how unworthy it is to be graced with the name of an artist whose works exhibit so eminent an excellence; but the merit we cannot approach

— always, expressing your regard.

FRANK RANELAGH.

lon, March 24th, 1845.

MAIDS OF HONOUR.

CHAPTER I.

THE BRIGADIER AND HIS DAUGHTER.

Had I Hanover, Bremen and Verden,
And likewise the Duchy of Zelle,
I'd part with them all for a farden,
To have my dear Molly Lepel.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

LITTLE more than fourteen years after the commencement of the eighteenth century, England was in a strange unsettled state that appeared to prognosticate a general conflict of its elements at no very remote period. Queen Anne had died, and the Elector of Hanover had succeeded to the throne she left vacant. The people who beheld

which had brought about so extraordinary
expatriation.

He indomitable energy and practical common sense of the cold and formal William of Nassau, the military successes which illumined the reign of Queen Anne, reconciled the great body of the nation to the loss of the most insignificant of the weak and worthless Stuarts; but on James being transferred to the brow of a foreign prince, who took no pains to conceal his aversion to their language and constitution, viewed as careless of the feelings of his new subjects, as he was indifferent to their sentiments, the people began to consider that James had been hardly dealt with; and even had he deserved perpetual expatriation, it might be a great and inexcusable wrong to punish his descendants, who were guiltless of the vilest share in them.

public decency in England by maintaining a harem of Hanoverian mistresses, whose persons were of so dominant an ugliness as to repel the most easily pleased, and that he made it universally evident he cared for the kingdom he had been called to govern, only so far as it could be made profitable to the Electorate he had left, but not abandoned, more general became the reference of his subjects to the exiled family, and more frequently did they dwell upon the accounts that were in circulation, of their merits, their virtues and their misfortunes.

There was soon a considerable party in the country, who in secret were favourably disposed towards the exiles; and nothing but the fear which prevailed of the return of popery kept them from publicly making an effort for the restoration of the Stuarts to their hereditary honours.

Many persons, in England as well as in Scotland, held correspondence with the son of James II., which was of course studiously concealed from the ruling powers; and many were quite as sincere in their good wishes, but were much too prudent to display them. The spies of the government were exceedingly industrious in

er the kingdom, and every scandalous respecting the members of the reigning family and extensive and rapid circulation.

It so happened, that such reports could scarcely fail of possessing a zest for those who chosen to them. The King knew very little and seemed to know very little respecting the people he governed. He was in constant variance with his son, whom he seemed to despise and distrust, and who it was evident returned his feelings with interest. He appeared to have no family ties, and, except one son, no family connections—at least none that were evident to English subjects.

The father and son were much alike in respects, they were both headstrong, weak, impetuous, licentious without the slightest assumption of refinement or delicacy ; yet brave, and on other rare occasions liberal. They opposed

gallantries of both were equally notorious and equally offensive ; and if the King of England permitted himself to be governed by old and ugly German harridans, whom he allowed apartments in St. James', the Prince of Wales though possessed of an excellent wife, dishonoured by his attentions as many of his father's fair subjects as he thought proper to distinguish in that way.

But our business is not at present with the Court ; we have better, though humbler game in view, which without further preface, we beg leave to present to the courteous reader.

Brigadier-General Lepel, a brave and accomplished officer, who had honourably distinguished himself in the continental wars of Queen Anne, had on the accession of the Elector of Hanover to the British throne, chosen to live a little retired from the public eye, though certainly not out of the world, in a handsome mansion situated in a picturesque part of the rural village of Petersham. Here, whilst enjoying all that is most refreshing in a country life, from his vicinity to Hampton Court, and near neighbourhood to the capital he had frequent opportunities of bringing around him whatever was most attractive in town society. He had always courted the friendship

g among his most familiar acqu
ces.

General Lepel was a remarkably vain i
ough old enough to have long cast aside
lies of his youth, he was as thorough a
the youngest soldier in his regiment.
s, however, but the harmless coxcombr
, that displayed itself in an appearance scr
sly neat, in an inordinate fondness for
ying likenesses of his own dear person, an
tudied effort to surround himself with the n
osing evidences of wealth and station.

The Brigadier's vanity was extremely comp
sive. He was vain of his military rank;
vain of his pictures, china, and plate; he
vain of his person; but more than all,
vain of one fair daughter, whose attracti
ht have excused a much greater degree
ty than that with which she was regarded
doting parent.

this usually irreparable loss. Her form and features had almost from infancy been peculiarly prepossessing; and her disposition was marked by so much winning affectionateness, that she soon came to be as much a favourite with the General's friends as with himself.

She in due time received all the advantages the system of schooling then in vogue could confer upon her; and at the period to which we have arrived, had returned from a fashionable school; her impassioned nature brimming over with romance, and her heart and mind impressed with the most generous sentiments of which a romantic school-girl was ever possessed.

Mary Lepel had had but lately completed her fifteenth year; but the charm of youth was not more evident in her faultless face than was the still greater charm of innate purity of feeling. She was rather under the medium height, with a figure possessed of the most exquisite proportions; buoyant, graceful, and confiding; and owning a complexion radiantly fair, every feature marked with a sense of beauty rarely given to the human face in its most perfect form.

She had, as we have said, just left school, where she had been taught all the accomplishments then

could carve at table fish, flesh, and fowl, with equal dexterity and elegance. She could dance and minuet with a grace altogether unrivalled; she was a horse to the admiration of all the Nimrod of her acquaintance. She was thoroughly conversant with household economy, and had had a useful training in potting and preserving, baking, brewing, clear-starching, and all the fine arts in connexion with the kitchen, the store-room, the parlour, and the toilet. She spoke a little French, and played on the lute and harpsichord, and sung the pastoral ballad; and had learned as much history, astronomy, geography, and the use of the telescope, as she would find no difficulty in forgetting. In matters in which she should be more deeply interested came before her attention.

For needle-work, there were in her chamber several specimens in black frames that displayed her skill most prominently. One was a pastoral scene in worsted, in which a figure intended to

holding a long crook in the direction of several nondescript animals, looking very unlike sheep, which were supposed to be kept in their places by the assistance of an indistinguishable black mass near them that did duty for a dog, and might have represented an elephant with equal fidelity.

In each corner of this admirable landscape was a kind of lilliputian spread-eagle, intended to represent a butterfly, and underneath several lines speaking decidedly on the happiness of shepherds in general, and highly laudatory of the morals of this one in particular.

Another specimen of this accomplishment contained two full-length figures, displaying great masses of yellow, crimson, brown, and white, which it was usually asserted the artist considered to be resemblances of King Solomon and Queen Sheba; but which was Solomon and which Sheba the most learned had not ventured to pronounce. Many other examples of the same art were in this chamber, which unnecessarily corroborated the evidence of the extraordinary skill the two just described so fully established.

In her store of useful knowledge we may name at least a dozen washes for the complexion, an incomparable salve for chapped hands, and an un-

prominent among these was an extraordinary
petite for romance, which, while it made her
discriminate reader of all the extravagant
fictions of the last age, tinged her whole nature
completely with the exaggerated colouring
which distinguishes them, it was scarcely possible
to imagine, even amongst the heroines of those
tragic productions, a creature at once so excel-
lently beautiful, and so exceedingly romantic.
Nor had her youthful mind become by the
reading of those productions, that she was continu-
ally referring to the proceedings of those persons
who were described as figuring in them pre-
eminently; and a certain "Prince Oroondato"
so captivated her fancy, that she regarded
him as her *beau idéal* of a lover, and would
not listen to any one presenting himself as
such, had he fallen short of the Prince's per-
fections. In this enthusiasm, however, she was
alone: for a French lady of the same rank

came the father of the celebrated Marshal Villars.

But what can be said of a young lady of fifteen, whose ideas had been almost wholly drawn from the interminable narratives of Calprenede and Scudery? And, moreover, what could be expected from one so fair and imaginative, taken from the dull formality of the school-room, cheered only by the false brilliancy of the erroneous speculations and delusive visions, arising from such a course of reading, to be placed at the head of the handsome establishment of Brigadier-General Lepel.

The General, though not famous for much consideration, had considered that, although his daughter might not be deficient in the proper accomplishments suitable for a child of his, for whom he entertained particularly proud notions, a little experience might be of great advantage to her, and he judiciously sought the assistance of one better qualified to bestow it, in his opinion, than any one of his numerous acquaintance, male or female.

A little time after the return of the young lady to the paternal home, the Brigadier was seated by the breakfast table on a heavy cushioned chair

man portion of a pair of very fine clock
kings, that encased his feet as they rest
legs stretched at full length, on a cushion
stool before him.

On the table covered with a handsome damask
cloth, was a very beautifully chased silver
tray and costly china service; and among
various plates of viands was a silver-bound ink
stand opened, displaying a small gold bowl, with
a spoon of the same precious metal resting upon
it. On each side of it was a silver sugar
bowl filled with fine sugar with which it was filled
and on each side of it, a silver cannister
for drinking tea.

The room was capacious and lofty: its floor
was covered with a Turkey carpet, with a pile thick
enough to outlast the wear of many generations
and the walls were portraits, as might be supposed
of the Lepel family; but this was
false, though from a family likeness that re-
sembled them all it was evident that they were

pistols at his holsters, jack boots, his cocked-hat standing on the top of a very full wig, and his sword drawn. This was Cornet Lepel.

Not very far off, the eye rested upon the same features. This person wore a green silk knit waistcoat—the pockets falling to the hips—ornamented with gold and silver flowers, and almost covered with gold lace; over it was a brown flowered velvet coat with cuffs extending back to the elbow, also richly trimmed with embroidery; his head and shoulders bore a tremendous white periwig; a sword was at his side; the breeches were of the same material as the coat; and below were blue silk stockings with silver clocks, velvet garters, and high shoes with red heels and small silver buckles. The gentleman was in the act of taking a pinch of snuff from a gold box. This was Captain Lepel.

Further on, was the same excellent officer in a different dress, and by the foliage and fountain introduced in the canvas, and by the clouded cane dangling at the wrist, he was supposed to be taking an airing. This was Major Lepel.

Colonel Lepel was represented in another frame leaning on a cannon; and General Lepel sat at a table covered with papers, with a scroll in

portraits were drawn from one original—the
Petersham Manor.

Opposite to the Brigadier sat the very young and very graceful figure of the young mistress of the mansion, with laced stomacher and a white muslin apron over a very full moiré dress; her hair tied up with ribands and curled on the sides. She occasionally amused herself whilst sipping from a tea cup and saucer she held in one hand, by playing with the long ears of the spaniel that rested at her feet.

The Brigadier turned with complacency at the reflection of his costly dressing gown in the mirror before him to his various representations on the walls. His eye travelled from one picture to another with increasing satisfaction, till he came to that of the glittering, handsome captain as he remembered his celebrity as a general, of the Court of William and Mary

without wrinkles, and fortune procured devoid of crows'-feet, failing eye-sight, deficient hearing, and shrunken limbs.

The General put down "the Post-Boy," whence he had been gleaning the latest news, and sighed for the golden days that never could return; but in making this movement his eyes fell upon the animated features of his beautiful daughter, and their happy sunshine dispersed in a moment the gloom that had fallen on his spirits. His self-love drew an inexhaustible fund of consolation from that faultless form and countenance. How admirably were they formed to shine at Court! what a sensation they would cause amongst the brilliant circle at St. James'! What importance, what consideration, what preferment might he not look for, when his matchless daughter was acknowledged the chief attraction in the royal palaces!

He called to mind his early courtier days—for he was still a courtier—how readily by a prepossessing appearance and devoted manner he had obtained the favour of two female sovereigns, and bowed, and smiled, and flattered his way to patronage and distinction; became the idol of all the women, and the envy of all the men. He remem-

aining from any vice which chanced
ut of fashion. Surely, he thought, th
er would be no less easy, and might be
ore brilliant, of a Court favourite of the othe

To do him justice, he did not anticipat
s innocent and beauteous daughter the em
ent of any of the very questionable mea
lvancement, he had himself found it nece
use ; he would have recoiled from subm
r to so terrible an ordeal, had he imagined
sential to the fulfilment of his views. Bu
ibition appeared to have thrust his experi
de, and clothed his dreams of greatness
splendour that allowed of neither blot
w.

He did not for a moment consider the da
abandoning a young and pure-minded wo
rare personal attractions, to the blandishm
a thoughtless and licentious circle. He

.

august parent in the coarseness and vulgarity of his disposition.

Neither of these princes excited in General Lepel any misgivings or fears respecting the welfare of the lovely being he wished to place near them; as the affections of the first were known to be monopolized by the ugliest mistress in his dominions, and the other was married to a beautiful and talented princess who gave him no cause for seeking gratification beyond the sphere of her influence.

Dishonourable intimacies he did not fear, indeed he did not think of them, his mind was too much engrossed with proud and happy visions, in which an alliance with some powerful prince or wealthy duke at the least, formed always a principal feature, to find entrance for anything discreditable or humiliating.

The Brigadier had already considered the line of operation necessary to the complete realization of his wishes. He would open his house to the visits of the most distinguished members of that select coterie so admired and honoured under the title of "the Court." He would do more, he would entertain at his table the most celebrated members of the world of letters, the rising wits,

en, and the subject of every tongue ; till
oyal attention was sufficiently excited and
ecessary influence exercised, to cause her sph
action to become the exalted one, her ambitio
ther desired.

As he developed this plan in his mind, t
eneral resolved to take the advice of a frien
io though belonging to that much abused cla
old women," was well entitled to be considere
nsellor in all matters relating to court patro
, such as the whole world could not produce.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT DUCHESS.

That face, that form, that dignity, that ease,
Those powers of pleasing, with that will to please,
By which Lepel, when in her youthful days,
Even from the currish Pope extorted praise.

CHURCHILL.

THE Brigadier had taken snuff from a superb box, as he always did when engaged, or wishing to be thought engaged in deep reflection, and had wiped very carefully, with a cambric handkerchief the stray particles of the dust from his upper lip, which was generally a sure sign that he had finished his thoughts and was about to give them utterance.

“Madam Lepel,” said he with the deliberation of one who considers well before he speaks. The young lady left off balancing her spoon on the edge of her tea-cup, a performance she had assi-

inerva House, Newington Butts, where she
tained her education.

“Madam Lepel,” repeated the General,
ve thought it necessary, and I have no rea
doubt it will be mightily to your advantage
at you should cease to attend the course
struction considered essential to young ladies
high connexions.”

The Brigadier paused ; but if he expected a
mark from his daughter, he must have been
atly disappointed ; for she had been too com
tely a pupil of the peerless Penelope Stiffart
rn, to change the upright attitude and atten
e gaze with which she had been taught to
eive communications from superiors, teachers
ents, and guardians.

The Brigadier pursued the thread of his d

“You will find yourself in a new sphere, and to accommodate yourself to it entirely, you will be so good as to divest yourself of all those thoughts, feelings, and pursuits which though mighty proper as a school-girl at Minerva House, would be monstrous out of place, and prodigious unbecoming in the heiress of Brigadier-General Lepel doing the honours of Petersham Manor.”

Again the Brigadier paused, and Miss Lepel continued to sit with her hands on her lap, her chest thrown forwards, and her shoulders at a due distance from the back of the chair on which she sat.

“I intend to entertain,” added he, “the very best company that can be attracted to my house : people of the highest distinction—alike celebrated as persons of family, of rank, and of good breeding. I intend you to sit at the head of my table ; and expect that you will consider yourself as the mistress of my house, to whom both my guests and my servants are bound to shew the most marked respect.”

This pause received no more interruption than the others ; notwithstanding it was a somewhat startling announcement to the very young creature to whom it was addressed.

“As I am infinitely anxious,” continued the

... for you the advice and countenance
dy of quality, whose familiarity with the v
st company cannot be surpassed by any o
trust that I shall have no reason to compl
your inattention to my wishes. I hope t
u will at all times cheerfully and carefu
deavour to fulfil them."

As the General took out his snuff-box
lenish his nostrils, it was a sign that he h
npleted his speech; and as this moveme
ured his daughter he had ceased to addre
and waited her reply, she knew she mig
venture to speak.

"I am sensible, honoured Sir, of your very gre
dness," she replied, preserving her attitude
ugh she had been cast in the material of th
res in toy-shops, "and shall be but too happ
shew my urgent desire to give you ple
."

Miss Penelope Stiffendram

seemed to dwell on the words he had heard, perfectly satisfied that they contained just as much affection as ought to proceed from a dutiful daughter, and just as little familiarity as should be found in the language addressed by such a daughter to a Brigadier-General. But whatever his sentiments may have been, he had no time just now to entertain them, as a loud summons at the house-bell announced visitors; and scarcely had he taken a full survey of himself in the mirror, when a servant in livery threw open the door of the breakfast-room, and announced in a loud voice—

“The Duchess of Marlborough!”

“Madam Lepel,” observed the General in his stateliest manner, as he rose from his seat, “you will be so good as to meet the Duchess in the amber-room, and prepare to find in her Grace the lady of quality whose countenance and advice I promised you a few minutes since. I will do myself the honour to join you as soon as I have completed my morning toilet.”

The well-schooled young lady had quitted her seat directly it became evident to her quick apprehension it was proper for her so to do, and dropping to her father a respectful, but very

we are having before her an interview with
erson of such celebrity as her father's visit
nd directed her steps towards the apartment
hich her Grace had been ushered, with some
npleasant misgivings she should fail in securing
promised good offices; nevertheless she
er little hand on the handle of the door with
e fullest determination of recommending herself
lf to the dreaded Duchess as much as
nowledge she had acquired at Minerva House
ould allow.

Acting on this resolution it was impossible
r the most perfect of the inmates of this
ashionable seat of learning, to have acquitted
rself in the valuable art of entering a room
th more studied propriety of demeanour, than
s exhibited by the youthful Mary Lepel,
e ventured into the presence of the stern and
tely Duchess of Marlborough.

Alas! for the ardent aspirant for her Grace's

thrown away:—her father's visitor having placed herself at the end of that long and handsomely decorated apartment, where she was intently examining some enamels. Pictures of battles were round the walls—battles which had been no less glorious to Marlborough than to England; but the attraction they had for their owner was less, infinitely less drawn from the great triumphs they delineated, than from each possessing a figure of an officer signalling himself in an extremely heroic fashion:—that of course represented the owner of Petersham Manor.

Mary Lepel, as she stood at the door somewhat irresolute and disconcerted at the complete failure of her irreproachable entrance, was enabled to observe the figure of an old lady in a sacque, seated in a fauteuil, bending over the miniature of a very handsome young man. It was the General once more; but it was the General at a period when he first attracted the attention of the Duchess; and those much admired features awakened in her Grace a whole flood of recollections that had lain dormant long enough to have been forgotten.

The intimacy which had existed between the young officer and his influential friend did not

The Brigadier's daughter found herself in a situation where the numerous lessons in breeding she had received from the careful *loper Stiffandstern* did not afford her the slightest hint by which she might profit. None better how to enter a room ; few could leave with so graceful a ceremoniousness : she pay her respects and offer her adieus, after the most approved mode known to the polite world. These observances formed an important feature in her daily instruction at *Minerva House* ; however she might profit by them, it became unpleasantly evident to her that they could in the slightest degree, help her in her present rather embarrassing position.

Left entirely to her own resources, she could think only of endeavouring to attract the

Poor girl! she would have spared her lungs had she known that their exercise was bestowed upon a person as deaf as a post. Her only hope seemed in the chance she had of attracting the Duchess's attention, and she continued to advance nearer and nearer in the belief that the moment her father's visitor moved her eyes from the enamel, she must come under her observation.

Alas! for any consolation coming from such belief;—the poor lady could not see, with any accuracy, an inch beyond her nose. Probably Miss Lepel might very soon have given up her hope of introducing herself to so important a personage; but at that moment a heavy sigh was breathed by the old lady as she replaced the miniature, and her reminiscences of power and worship appeared to be brought to a conclusion.

"What are you doing there!" was the startling intimation given to the young heiress that she had been observed, expressed in a very abrupt manner, and with a very sharp voice.

Mary Lepel did not feel less embarrassed for being addressed so rudely; and the searching restless eyes that met her own, the dark frown, the dissatisfied yet haughty expression that appeared in the severe scrutiny she seemed to be

the harsh voice. "Come forward, and tell who you are, and what you want."

Mary Lepel made her most perfect curtsey, but she was much too frightened of her companion to be eager to get into a closer neighbourhood. She scarcely advanced a step.

"D'ye hear!" shouted the Duchess in a voice that literally made her start. "Don't stick to me like a fool. What are you doing?—what brought you here? Say your errand, and go about your business."

"Please your Grace—" murmured the terrified girl.

"Speak out!" interrupted the other in a voice of thunder.

"Please your Grace," repeated the young lady, very little elevating her tones, "please your Grace—"

"What can the creature be mumbling about?" growled the old lady. "Come here, if you have any business."

The young heiress had got near enough to her dreaded visitor to be in some degree within the scope of her observation, which seemed to be every minute getting more close and severe.

“Please your Grace I—that is to say, my father—”

“Oh, you are the Brigadier’s daughter are you?” rudely, and somewhat fiercely cried her Grace of Marlborough, as she continued her scrutiny. “I don’t think much of your breeding. You are as awkward as if you had been brought up in a dog-kennel. What have you been doing with yourself? Where have you been taught?”

Poor Mary Lepel! Often had she heard her father dilate on the immense authority of his valued friend the *great* Duchess of Marlborough—as he always styled her in honour of her illustrious husband—in all matters in the slightest degree relating to personal appearance, which she derived from her long residence at Court, where so extraordinary was her influence, she was far more queenly than the Sovereign; and the young lady had been taught to regard her favour as equivalent to success, and to look upon her censure as the most certain sign of her prospects

heard how rudely her deficiency in good ma was insisted on, she felt ready to sink int earth for very shame and mortification.

But the trials of the young heiress had sc commenced. The Duchess, still continuing rough and abrupt address, presently bega catechise her as to what she had been ta and treated the information she received superlative contempt; taking care to make known by a few sharp ejaculations, the t of which it was impossible to doubt.

She then commenced an examination into nature and extent of such accomplishments making the terrified girl display her profici before her. Her Grace commanded her to d . minuet;—a command the poor girl foun lmost as impossible to fulfil as to evade. began the figure; her companion humming ir and beating the time with more preci

Mary Lepel was now before a much more formidable judge, whose previous harsh bearing, repeated violent exclamations of disapproval, and directions to alter this and the other as she proceeded, so confused her, she felt powerfully convinced the youngest of her school-fellows would have acquitted herself better. When the Duchess finished her most unmusical accompaniment, she therefore was not greatly surprised at being told that she danced like a Polar bear.

The young lady was next desired to sing. If she had felt disqualified for all graceful exertion of her limbs, she was a thousand times more unfit for any melodious exercise of her voice. Nevertheless the mandate had gone forth, and sing she must. She could have cried with a vast deal more ease. Her lute was in the room, she took it up mechanically, and as directed, placed herself opposite her severe examiner.

Often had she won the warmest praise of excellent judges, by her singing; and one song particularly never failed of securing for her universal admiration. But now, scarcely able to breathe, hardly conscious of where she was, or what she was about, she despaired of producing the smallest degree of commendation from her present audience.

a martyr being consumed at the stake, and
the voice of one whose sense of speech is rapidly
disappearing, the trembling, sinking, palpitating
Mary Lepel, commenced the following

CANZONET.

How happy with my silly sheep
I passed the live-long day,
With nothing but my crook to keep
The hungry wolf away.
I would have learned the danger near
To view with fear and loathing,
Had not the wolf I'd cause to fear
Approached me in sheep's cloathing.

Oh ne'er did I my charge neglect
Since Damon first drew near,
And spoke in fondest phrase unchecked,
And piped so sweet and clear.
Ah ! sillier than the silly sheep
That wolves to slay endeavour ;

...

tinct murmur mixed with a stifled sobbing, and not altogether without tears—for she was hurt by the uncereemonious treatment she had received. She laboured through the song with an overcharged heart, wishing at every bar of the melody she could find some means of bringing it to a speedy end. Her auditor stared at her during the performance with so contemptuous an indifference as greatly to increase her confusion and distress. At the conclusion there was a brief silence, which the Duchess at last broke.

“Child,” said she, very coldly, “your voice is like a bee in a bottle.”

This unpleasant examination was brought to a conclusion, by the opening of the folding doors of the apartment and the announcement by a footman of “Brigadier General Lepel!” He immediately made his appearance, with a profound reverence, in a brown-flowered velvet coat, richly trimmed, and further set off by a pair of very handsome ruffles; his cocked hat under his arm, and his sword knot dangling beside his velvet breeches.

He advanced, every handsome feature giving indication of extreme suavity, devotion and satisfaction, and bowing easily and gracefully as he

appearance. It was a welcome release from the most disagreeable situation she had ever placed in. Now she thought the great Duke would unbend, and to her father and herself converse in a pleasant familiar manner on the face of old friends; but here again she was sad in her reckoning. To her surprise, the Duke instead of taking her by the hand as she was expecting, to present her to his powerful friends, passed her by, without bestowing upon her the slightest notice.

Her Grace of Marlborough would hardly have raised herself from her seat at the entrance of the emperor, therefore it is not singular she acceded to the Brigadier General nothing more than a slight bend as he approached. She recognised him by his title, and soon commenced a conversation of which she took upon herself the lion's share, as became a lioness of her pretensions; as though it

nected with the Court of England. Now and then, glancing off into notices of the great Duke, her husband, for the purpose of drawing comparisons, by which some distinguished statesman or general was made to sink into contempt.

All this time the beautiful Mary Lepel stood a little apart from the two seniors, fully convinced that when they had done with the important matters on which they were conversing, she should be called into notice; but to her extreme astonishment on went the Duchess, demolishing kings, princes, commanders, ministers of state, senators, ambassadors, lawyers, poets and divines, as though they were so many rotten sticks put up but to be knocked to pieces by her rhetoric.

The Brigadier was the mirror of courtesy all this time; although he heard many of his most esteemed associates borne down by a torrent of vituperation—men of whose notice he had been in the habit of boasting as of a personal honour peculiarly agreeable to his vanity—he stood before their defamer, smiling and assenting as graciously, as if she was prodigiously recommending herself to his good will by her exertions against his best friends.

Suddenly as if satisfied with the extent of her

operations in this way, the Duchess rose from her seat and walked towards the door. The Brigadier placed himself at her side, and continued, as if in respectful attendance upon her, listening and bowing apparently with immense satisfaction.

His daughter felt as if she could die of vexation, as she observed the great Duchess on whose patronage she had so strongly relied, sailing out at the door, which would hardly allow her free passage, so prodigious was her hoop, without bestowing upon her either a word or a glance. As soon as they had disappeared, she hurried to her own chamber, where she gave full vent to her tears, heartily wishing herself again under the austere rule of Penelope Stiffandstern; and the only consolation she could find from such extraordinary humiliation as she had just been made to experience, was derived from the knowledge, that there was no heroine in "*Le grand Cyrus*" who could by any possibility have endured so cruel a disappointment.

Had, however, the young heiress accompanied her father and his important friend out of the reception room, it is likely she might have derived consolation from another source: for as they

were approaching the Duchess' sedan, by which the bearers stood ready to receive her, and the General's lacqueys to attend her exit from their master's house, the Brigadier said in a distinct voice: "What does your Grace think of her?"

"There is much for her to learn," replied the Duchess, in a similar tone. "She is very young, Brigadier, very young, and certainly very good looking; in the latter respect she is a true Lepel."

The Brigadier bowed his best bow, and paid one of his most irresistible compliments.

"As I am now living so very near you," added her Grace, condescendingly, "I may perhaps find an opportunity of calling here occasionally to give Madam Lepel a few hints, which may be valuable to her. With these, I have no doubt in a short time she will be able to make such a figure at Court as must satisfy her best friends."

The Brigadier handed the Duchess into her sedan with an appearance of gallantry, never exceeded in his most brilliant days. The chairmen took up their burthen, the lacqueys drew back the doors as wide as possible, with a most respectful alacrity, the iron gates were thrown open

CHAPTER III.

HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS.

From hence it arises, that they are but in a lower degree what their masters themselves are; and usually affect an imitation of their manners: and you have in liveries beaux, fops, and coxcombs, in as high perfection as among people that keep equipages.

THE SPECTATOR.

THIS is an age of inventions: all sorts of wonderful machines are continually being produced to create all sorts of wonderful effects. There seems to be no bounds to the experiments of the projector. The ancient mechanic modestly said, if a place could be found in which to fix his machinery, he would move the world; but the Archimedes of our times dispense with *ifs*, and are ready to move Heaven and earth every day of their lives to gain a respectable subsistence.

The famous mill that ground old people young,

agers into youthful gentlemen and juvenile
that present themselves to our notice in 1
world around us.

Some machine no less miraculous must
existence, that changes great sinners into
saints, and sprouting Whigs into full
Tories; but despite of the seemingly e
variety of marvellous inventions, we are left
out many very necessary machines, which
surprising have never been thought of.
would be given for some patent apparatus
transform the intractable shrew into the
tionate helpmate; the notoriously overrea
knave into the man distinguished for a nice
of honour; the unsuccessful author into
amiable critic; the defeated minister into a l
and considerate leader of the opposition;
new convert into a tolerant observer of
abandoned faith; or some faded beauty in
honest admirer of a youthful beauty.

no less marvellous, are frequently brought before us, and of these the most wonderful is the transformation by which the simple girl is changed into the knowing woman. Of all the phenomena to be found in this strange world, nothing is so singular; you see the modest, blushing, quiet, dependant maid, suddenly change to the steady, self-possessed, dignified, governing woman. The reefer who climbs aloft in his storm-tossed bark, must wait almost an honest man's life-time and suffer many a sea-change, before he can attain an admiral's rank and influence; but a girl starting at the same age into the perils and troubles of her career, glides at once and imperceptibly into a woman's highest responsibilities.

It seemed thus with our heroine. The daughter of the Brigadier took up her important position as directress of the household at Petersham Manor, apparently as completely at home in all its duties, as though she had been its mistress some twenty years. The domestics, from Rackstraw, the white-headed butler, to the young woolly-pated negro page, Pompey, seemed never to tire of expressing their astonishment and admiration at her extraordinary familiarity with the most minute matters connected with household

who knew what she was about and who were about too. They soon saw that peccol was dangerous, and waste not to be allowed became unusually attentive in their works the domestic deities, cleanliness, order, and sobriety. Even the despot of the kitchen, Molly, neglected usquebaugh and a too for abuse of the powers of speech, when listening the commands of the fair young girl who now, in domestic affairs, she acknowledged of the family.

But the opinions of the lower house may be gathered from the whole body corporate full conclave assembled, one summer's evening in a long narrow chamber, called the seraglio hall where they were wont after supper, to discuss the merits and demerits of their betters, whatever eatables and drinkables belonged to them, they could get access to. A large lamp swung by an iron chain from the ceiling

At the head of the table was always conspicuous the white head, displaying its peculiar cauliflower luxuriance, and almost endless curls, of the sedate and sententious Rackstraw, the highly respectable butler of the Brigadier. He was a smooth-faced, clear-complexioned man with a few well marked wrinkles on the forehead and about the mouth. Whether these marked the play of the muscles in thinking, laughing, or eating we have not been able to ascertain. We know only that he thought a little, he laughed much, and he ate more.

His reflections were, of course, such as became a person of his importance in the family; but it is at least doubtful they were of such weight as would leave a sensible impression on himself, or any body else. Consequently they scarcely serve to account for the wrinkles.

Rackstraw may very possibly have laughed his face into a complete map of lines; for be it known, before his betters he ever wore that becoming gravity that the proverb allows to judges, and to judges only. He knew his place better even than to smile, notwithstanding he had been frequently present when amongst his master's guests, jokes flew about that might have raised a cachinnation

Manor; the force then employed no doubt some marks, like that of the tide on the shore, from the frequency and liberality with which he then and there expended his jocularities.

At the moment we are drawing his picture, the butler sat back in his capacious armchair away from the table, his portly figure well displayed, notwithstanding, so much of it was concealed under the flaps of the ample waistcoat that almost covered his entire body. But he was evidently a little inclined to run to stomps, stretched out legs crossed at the instep, tucked in silver-buckled shoes, shewed that he possessed well knit limbs, and a frame that had lost little of its original strength and symmetry.

Rackstraw's whole attention appeared absorbed in smoking a long clay pipe, from which a wreath of vapour hovered around his head, till it floated off through an open window a little way

to a singularly bull-necked, bullet-headed, broad-backed old fellow, with a rubicund spongy nose, adorned at the base with a most picturesque-looking mole, that heightened the effect of his broad blooming countenance exceedingly.

He too wore a coat, with tremendous cuffs, of the Lepel livery, and saucepan lid like buttons bearing the Lepel crest, and smoked a long pipe ; but he was distinguished from his fellow servant by wearing a huge powdered periwig with stiff curls all round, that as it happened to be worn very much on one side for the greater convenience of occasionally scratching the bald pate underneath, added greatly to the singularity of his appearance. This was John, the Brigadier's coachman.

Not far from this pair of important officials, appeared an immense face of a red hot hue, resembling in its intensity of colour the brick floor of the chamber. To speculate from its odd cap negligently put on, it was that of a woman ; a guess which a glance at the owner's vast extent of neck, and abundance of feminine drapery clearly established. But what woman before or since ever possessed such a face, as presented itself above the broadbacked chair in which she reposed herself

•

sleep, which persons of her habits are w
fall into, often with more convenience to
selves than to others.

In her present position, Mrs. Molly woul
formed an admirable subject for a Dutch p
Her eyes were closed and her mouth open
latter disclosing a thoroughfare of rather
dimensions. Her head having no support
falling back, till its weight became disagre
when it was thrown up with a spasmodic
that acted also upon the extended jaws, br
them together with a snap that would ma
sleeper open her drowsy eyes, stare be
edly for a moment, and then close the
a jerk more violent than the last again r
her.

Mrs. Molly reclined with folded arms,
looked like the folds of some huge reptile
around her ample person, of the same hue
face, and shining like one of her own teeth.

sleep was so customary a matter, that no one present attempted to disturb her or even to risk a comment on her position.

But the cook at Petersham Manor was a personage not to be disturbed with impunity ; she was a despot in her domain, such as even the powerful Rackstraw did not choose to offend, and the minor domestics dared as soon beard a lion as attempt. So Mrs. Molly, when she had made herself comfortable with a social glass with her fellow servants, after the termination of the day's work, was invariably allowed to indulge in a nap, broken only by those powerful jerks of the muscles of her neck, aforesaid.

Opposite to her were the two young housemaids, Mrs. Lucy and Mrs. Kitty, with gay, good-humoured faces, and neat cotton gowns ; each wearing an aspect of much mystery, mingled with a little apprehension, for they were quietly engaged in telling their own fortunes, by means of a pack of cards spread out on the table before them.

Lower down the table, at the further end, sat Pompey on a tall stool, playing at draughts with a lean, long-visaged, spindle-shanked man, with a mop of what looked like burnt tow on his

rous strings, which with speckled stockings buckled shoes, completed his costume. If Sandie, the Brigadier's gardener. It was no small matter to guess who was winning; the little negro was grinning at a rate that made one of his white teeth visible, whilst the dried physiognomy of the Scottish gardener had an expression both troubled and puzzled.

On the table were various mugs and a candle burning in a brass candlestick, and a jar containing tobacco for the use of the smokers and on the walls of the room were two or three unglazed, rudely coloured prints of the bust of the Duke of Marlborough, scarcely to be made out from the united effects of smoke and dirt.

There was a conversation going on between Rackstraw and John Coachman: the subject which was—their new mistress. John had been

of many of the highest families from the time he was a stable-boy, up to that glorious period of his existence when he ascended the coach-box of the carriage of the Hero of Blenheim :—an epoch in his life which he regarded with such interest, that he always took great care to have about him some memorials of the event ; of which the coloured prints on the walls, and the brass head of the Duke in the form of a tobacco-stopper he carried in his pocket, were the principal.

If John Coachman had a fault, it was an inclination to be confidential over his pipe ;—not that a confidence that begins in smoke, in which of course it has a natural tendency to end, is particularly dangerous under ordinary circumstances ; but John's confidences were not always discreet. He possessed the ordinary failing of ordinary servants—a taste for slandering their betters. In some cases this proceeds from mere vulgar malevolence ; but the Brigadier's coachman, whenever he did anything not particularly creditable to his numerous masters and mistresses, did so from habit, rather than from malice. We don't know whether, like the lower House of Parliament in times gone by, before proceeding to business, he craved liberty of speech on his enter-

nothing of the kind could ever be at
to his fellow-smoker, or he never would
obtained his confidential position in the es-
tablishment of so particular a master as Brigadier-
General Lepel. The sagacious Rackstraw had
confidants. He followed, as far as was possible,
an admirable maxim, which in golden words
ought to be fixed in some conspicuous place
in all domestic establishments: "Hear, and
say nothing." In the course of his career
he had heard a good deal, he had seen a good deal,
concerning what he had heard and seen,
exercised a most praiseworthy discretion.

Nevertheless, however averse to making
confidants, he was far from being opposed to receiving
confidential communications from others. In-
deed it appeared as though he experienced
considerable gratification in obtaining from his
guarded associates, every little matter of
intelligence it was in their power to supply.

required, and sometimes putting in an exclamation of surprise or encouragement; but when his friend had come to the end of his revelations, and expected as a matter of justice, his attentive listener would be equally communicative, he found him as dry as a tinder-box.

“Ah!” said John Coachman, pathetically, as he knocked the ashes out of his exhausted pipe, to replenish the bowl, “it’s much to be hoped our master’s daughter aint a-going to Court.”

“Why not, John?” inquired the Butler.

“Why not!” repeated the other, sharply. “Because it’s a shame and a disgrace for a young innocent creature like such as our sweet young Madam Lepel to be seen at such a place. I remember the time, when good Queen Anne was alive, when quality-folks showed a proper respect for their own reputations, and were sure of having good servants to wait on them; but now there aint one in ten of tip-top masters and missises, as any honest servant as knows the value of his character, would demean himself by looking after.”

“Bless me! I did not think things were so changed,” exclaimed Rackstraw.

“Lord love you, Mister Butler, no change

chances of seeing what was going on in the world, such as fall to the lot of few, ever in an honourable and useful situation. Placed in such places then. And though the Duke was more particular, and the Duchess an uncle more so, there was at least the comfort of knowing we lived in decent society. But Anne died, and the Elector of Hanover came from foreign parts to take the reins. The Duke and the new government didn't hit their heads well together at all; and as they seemed generally inclined to drive over him, I took my head to look out for another service."

The butler puffed away with a placid tenance, and evidently gave his whole attention to his friend's narrative.

"They did say the great Duke contrived to be in high favour with the Pretender, and I opposed our having a King from Hanover. It is as like as not and so on."

"What did you see, John?" quietly inquired Rackstraw, as he filled his companion's mug with ale.

"I saw the Hanoverian King almost as soon as he came over, Mister Butler," replied the other; and then replacing his wig, which had almost fallen off, added in a lower tone, "I don't like to say anything likely to be twisted into treason—and these are ticklish times when an honest coachman aint no safer than a lord—but had his Hanoverian Majesty come to me to be my deputy in driving the Brigadier's carriage, on the first look at him, I should have said he was hardly fit to be trusted with the washing of the wheels."

The butler was too prudent to make any comment on such a dangerous subject as their unpopular sovereign; but as his associate took a draught, his silence passed unobserved.

"But looks mustn't always be trusted," said John, as though he thought he had said too much. "I dare say an honest cheerful face ain't so necessary to a king as it is to a coachman; so I don't pretend to blame King George on account of his want of handsomeness. His appearance might do very well for a throne, however ill it

“ Undoubtedly, John.”

“ Well, let the King look like a cobbler, no act of Parliament to shut him out of his so I shouldn't be led away by that. I've h people though who carry about them lit tures of the Pretender, and when any one n on the King's features or person, they how prodigious good looking is the Che as they calls him, and make comparisons, King George would not be altogether p with.”

“ Very indiscreet, John.”

“ But, Mister Butler, what aggravates tl the queer cattle as the Elector of Hanover th proper to bring over with him. There wasn of them that looked respectable enough i harnessed with a costermonger's donkey.”

“ Bless my heart, John, you don't say so

“ Every word I'm saying is as true as

if Hanover is the fine country it was cried up to be, in the good old times ; as far as Englishmen have been allowed to judge, men and women must be amongst the worst of its productions."

"But what have you seen of the men and women?"

"Seen!—I've seen enough to make my hair stand on end," exclaimed John, quite forgetting the very evident fact, that his bald head was protected by an artificial covering. "First of all there was the women. I'm not very squeamish myself; have known of some queer goings on in families; and remember even as far back as the gay doings of our merry monarch, Charles II., who played old Harry amongst the women. But then as I have heard from them as was eye witnesses, King Charles had some sort of excuse for being fond of them, for there wasn't one of the whole team, but what was the prettiest piece of flesh that eye ever looked upon; perfect in all her paces, young, full of blood, and in first rate condition. But the *frows*, as they call them, who stabled themselves in King George's palace, after he got the crown, were of all the animals I ever beheld, the most worthless, ugly, ill-shaped,

description of the royal favourites; and the audible sounds that followed the termination of the sentence, were two or three words from the housemaids, respecting the juxtaposition of "a dark man and a fair woman"—a chuckle of delight from the grinning Pompey—and a partaking of the two-fold character of a grumble and a snore, from the sleeping Mrs. Molly.

"I can't say much more for the men," replied the coachman, "though of the two, they are certainly the most wholesome. There was not this, and Baron t'other; and some said, notwithstanding their titles, they were the most count-able beings ever seen in England. But King's prime favourites of the male sex were heathen Turks, he had taken prisoner in Imperial wars, who were said to be hand and glove with their master, and could drive and follow him in any direction. All these outlandish

filched from the corn-bin of the state to an extent that left the cattle that did the work, scarcely a good feed a-day. The women, however, ugly as they were, took care to have the best stalls, and lived at rack and manger at the expense of their owner, in a way no fortune could stand. The King could not render them respectable or decent in their appearance; it was out of his power to make them in the least less intolerably old or less outrageously ugly; but he seemed to think he could never do enough for them. He gave them buckets full of guineas, and allowed them to take whatever they asked for, or didn't ask for. The consequence was, if they heard of any thing worth having, they would try to get it by hook or by crook; and if an Archbishop died, or a Lord Chancellor resigned, these unchristian looking old faggots would rush to their prodigal patron, and worry him to bestow the vacant posts upon them. No matter how unfit they were to draw in such harness, they knew what a warm stable and what capital feeds these Archbishops and Lord Chancellors had, and that was all they cared about.

“Now it so chanced, Mister Rackstraw, that after leaving the great Duke I took service with

“Servants can’t be too particular, and Master or Missis can’t give at least a month’s good character with themselves, y
be sure that ain’t a proper place for a res
upper servant.”

“Of course, John,” replied the butler, e
regarding the observation with all the res
an axiom.

“I was led away like a colt in a paddock
a whisp of hay, by the prospect of push
fortune at Court; and when I found the hal
been slipped over my head, and I was fi
for service, I soon discovered the prospe
all a catch. There seemed to be nothing
on but bribery and corruption: the lady
more conscience than beauty, and seemed
for nothing but plundering and cheating. I
her conduct would have disgraced the com
baggage that lived upon the streets. I four

enough of the doings at Court with her and the rest of the ladies from Hanover to make me thank my stars I had been born a coachman instead of a courtier. Bless your heart, it's not a place for our young Madam at all. Every horse to his crib say I; but beauty and good nature are as much out of place there, as I should be at young Madam's toilet."

"*You* at young Madam's toilet!" exclaimed Mrs. Kitty, who had been drawn from the attractions of fortune telling, by some observations that had met her ear respecting the behaviour of the Court ladies. "Vastly well, indeed! I should think one of the coach-horses would be quite as useful there."

"And a monstrous deal more ornamental," added Mrs. Lucy.

This caused both John Coachman and the butler to laugh so heartily, that Mrs. Molly, who had been jerked out of a dream, in which she fancied she had been fruitlessly engaged in playing at the rustic game of bob-apple, which every time she made a bite at, most tantalisingly bobbed away from her—a delusion caused by the continual jerking of her head we have already alluded to—jumped up on her seat, looking be-

one to the other. "I've been dreaming !

"Both surely and securely, Mrs. Moapplied the butler ; and then there was laugh, which the fiery head of the kitchen doubt whether to be angry or amused with ever, before she could make up her mind door opened, and a new actor entered upon scene who completely took off her attention

He was a young man of a genteel figure handsome, but effeminate features, his hair fully powdered and dressed in the reigning and his person as carefully clothed in the livery ; for in spite of his affected elegant manner and his genteel appearance, he was more important a personage than James Brigadier's new footman.

Nevertheless, though his station was high James had managed in the few days he had been at Petersham Manor, to create a very decid

graceful behaviour, he presented himself before her.

His manners had something in them superior to all footmen of her acquaintance, which boasted of a list of no mean length; and although there could be little doubt this was merely given at second hand from some polished original, in whose service he had been, it went a great way in his favour in the kitchen, and in the servant's hall worked wonders.

John Coachman, though he never could tell why, always looked up to him with an air of respect, and Pompey never met his glance, but he grinned his approbation, as he gazed in mingled wonder and gratification. The gardener was heard to mutter something very much resembling the word "Puppy," when James was once shewing off his gentility a little stronger than usual; and there was every reason to believe he held him in mortal aversion. The butler, like a prudent man as he was, whatever opinion he had of the new comer kept to himself, but behaved to him with his usual cordiality.

As to the girls, Mrs. Kitty and Mrs. Lucy, they were completely fascinated and captivated, and each rivalled the other as far as she dared in the

table humming an air, and taking a pinch from a large round box, with a figure of on the lid. Then as if to shew the polish manners, he with the air of a sovereign to chess, presented the open box to Mrs. Mol with a profusion of the properest phrases could think of, though in quite as great a as if the compliment had been paid her nobleman, inserted her fat red fingers in pungent powder and applied it liberally capacious nostrils.

Whilst she was shewing by a series of stations loud enough to be heard throughout the house, the efficacy of the snuff, the polite agreeable new comer was handing the box to the butler and the coachman, who pipe in hand from their chairs to acknowledge the civility in a way becoming their superior positions; placing it on the table between the smiling

"Stab my vitals, child!" he exclaimed, addressing Mrs. Kitty, and drawing a perfumed handkerchief over the lower part of his face, "you seem, to-night, positively to have lost your agreeable spirits. May I be allowed to inquire what has been the subject of your conversation, to have had so terrible and disastrous an effect on you, and all this good company."

"La, bless your heart, Mr. James," cried John Coachman, who was never known to be backward when a spokesman was required, "we were merely speaking of our young Madam; and I had just said I considered it a burning shame so pretty and admirable a creature should go to Court to have any thing to do with them German things as are the leaders of the team there."

"Well, I've heard of those Hanoverian hus-sies," exclaimed Mrs. Molly, a flash of indignation breaking over her already too illuminated countenance. "I'm ashamed of King George! Couldn't he find plenty of Englishwomen, that he should disgrace himself with a pack of greedy foreigners?"

"Perhaps, Mrs. Molly, he couldn't find any women in this country sufficiently plain to please him," remarked the new comer in his drawling

“I have seen the persons to whom teemed friend, John Coachman alludes, the footman. “Both the Schulenberg Kielmansegge; and am ready to aver, life! that a cross between a pug-dog and fish, could never be half so abominably atrociously hideous as either of them.”

There was a general laugh at this extreme simile, in which Mrs. Molly might be heard every one.

“But pon my life!” drawled out their servant, “I take the very fact of the Court disgraced by such insufferable monsters unanswerable argument for the presence of our most irresistible beauties. In sober I shall be obliged to give up going to Court something is not done shortly to make them more agreeable. Positively the present things is quite shocking.” Here he helped

The women looked sympathizing, the men in various degrees of indignation, save Pompey, who expressed his sense of enjoyment by sundry guttural sounds that usually did duty for a laugh. The gardener, however, appeared more indignant at the speaker than with his subject; and the butler seemed as though he thought too evident a display on his part of sympathy with the speaker might not be prudent.

“But to associate with such horrid bad characters as are these German baggages,” observed the Coachman, again taking the pipe from his mouth, “I am loath our young Madam should come to such a degradation. It is like putting a young, valuable, thorough bred, to draw in harness with some broken down, stone blind old dray oss, hardly good enough to put in the shafts of a sand cart.”

“Pon my life, so it is, my worthy charioteer,” replied the genteel footman. “You’ve expressed my sentiments in a manner I could never have attempted, positively. But what are you drinking, child?” he added, taking up the mug placed before Mrs. Kitty, and putting it to his lips—“Disgusting beer, by all that’s vulgar!” he ex-

accent, "I have a bottle of strong water. I have been recommended to take when the vapours, which is quite at your service."

"Wholesome malt liquor's a deal too much for such a coxcomb," muttered the garden in an inaudible tone.

"It's a capital brew this, Mister James," said John Coachman, encouragingly.

"Very capital, indeed," added Randal. "Indeed we rather pride ourselves upon it."

"But if he don't happen to like drinking," sharply observed Mrs. Molly, bringing forward a well filled black bottle, "he may leave it to me to suppose? This is Liberty Hall here. We let no one to swallow what they doesn't like. These are the strong waters I spoke of, Mr. James," added she, turning with a smile meant to be gracious to her new fellow-servant. "You're welcome to 'em, I assure you. With a li

yourself, Mister James, and make yourself comfortable."

James made many gracious acknowledgments, and did help himself; after he had mixed the steaming beverage in a vessel brought him for that purpose, he very civilly handed it to his female fellow-servants. "Mrs. Molly, I kiss your fair hand. Ladies, I drink to our better acquaintance. Gentlemen, my service to you:" he cried with all the ceremonious politeness of a finished courtier at a royal banquet. He drank a fair portion of it at once, making a decided wry face at the flavour, but it did not deter him from having recourse to it again.

"But I was about to say," added the new comer, addressing the two seniors, "that the very existence of these German monstrosities at Court made it imperative that the divinest creatures in England ought to be seen there. Indeed, I am in a condition to state, from very high authority, that it is intended the most beautiful of our young countrywomen shall be placed there as quickly as possible. Indeed, I have heard that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales"—

"Sad doings there too," suddenly observed John Coachman, who never missed an opportunity of

ous in a Christian country. The King
the Prince with the bitterest feelings of
and the Prince looks on his father with
much affection, as I should on a horse
kicked my front teeth down my throat.'

"Gad a mercy, friend, you seem well
on these points!" exclaimed the genteel
with a half-concealed yawn. "But of
the Prince, all I have to say is that I
Highness has in contemplation to establish
Court of his own, to be as much distinguished
the extreme loveliness of the ladies, and
compose it, as that of his royal father
for their abominable and horrible ugliness."

"A very proper proceeding, Mister
said Mrs. Molly, approvingly.

"Bless your heart!" cried John Coach
vently, "why, if the young 'un chooses
up a team of his own, and picks 'em

likely to be appointed in the Prince's establishment?" inquired the butler with evident interest for more intelligence.

"Undoubtedly, most esteemed and honoured butler," replied the other affectedly. "My friend the Prince, that is to say," hastily correcting himself, "the Prince's"—

"Shoe-black!" added the gardener in a caustic tone.

"Thank you, friend," replied the genteel footman, graciously; then continued with an unembarrassed air, "my friend the Prince's shoe-black informed me, it was decided that the Princess, his Royal Highness's inestimable consort, was to appoint four of the most angelic, the-a-most ravishing, divine, beautiful young ladies of quality, that could be found in England as her personal attendants; and that her Royal Highness had already named—"

All the company was listening with more than ordinary attention to the account that was being rendered to them, of this interesting and important arrangement; but of course they were anxious to catch the names of the fair creatures who had been selected to put to shame the Hanoverian frights. Greatly to their vexation,

~~... away to see~~
the untimely visitor.

CHAPTER V.

OUR HEROINE'S FIRST ADVENTURE.

But Bellenden I needs must name,
Who, as down stairs she jumps,
Sings "O'er the hills and far away,"
Despising doleful dumps.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

"*Ma foi*, now I look at you, child, you've grown vastly handsome!" exclaimed in a lively manner, in some slight degree tinged with affectation, a young and extremely beautiful woman dressed completely à-la-mode, as she gazed with evident gratification on the Brigadier's daughter. "When I left you in the careful guardianship of the peerless Penelope Stiffandstern to finish my education in France, you were a mere girl,—not without good looks certainly, *ma chère*, but in nothing varying from all the other good-looking

This complimentary speech was from loved school-fellow, Mary Bellenden, with Mary Lepel had so oft sworn an eternal ship; with whom she had so oft shared her readings of forbidden romances; and with whom she had so oft been in the habit of depositing most sacred confidences and all her romantic impressions. The two Marys, in short, were female Damon and Pythias of the school; when they were forced to separate, they entered into the most solemn engagements which they had finished their studies, to be as much together as possible.

Two years had elapsed, since Mary Bellenden had left her young friends at Minerva House; these two years she had passed in the Convent of St. Omer, then a fashionable finishing school for the young ladies of this country. What she had acquired there, and what she had learned

pretty woman—dress. Mary Bellenden, on the strength of her dressing in the last Parisian mode, and on her familiarity with certain phrases and actions she had heard and seen in constant employment amongst her French friends, together with a happy audacity and never failing good temper, appeared inclined to play a particularly leading part on her return to her friends in England.

She was of a noble family, being the daughter of Lord Bellenden; of a medium height, possessed an expressive oval face, with features delicately distinct, very brilliant eyes, dark hair, and a fine symmetrical figure.

It was the late arrival of the schoolfellow of their master's daughter that had so much disturbed the Brigadier's domestics; and now after having enjoyed as much rest as could be obtained, as soon as their extraordinary conversational powers had become a little subdued, the two schoolfellows were sitting together in Mary Lepel's delightful little sitting room, recounting to each other their individual history with all the adventures, impressions, doubts, fears, and pleasures they had experienced, since they had parted at the well known mansion in Newington Butts.

many nowers as could be placed there ; a g
in a cage hung on one side, and a tame
on the other. The room was handsomely fi
with all requisites for a lady's ease, and p
several pretty ornaments, that gave a st
feminine aspect to the refinement the
decorations expressed. These ornaments
consisted of China figures of shepherds an
herdresses, pretty nick-nacks in carved iv
Tunbridge ware—birthday presents from e
friends and relatives—a few shells and n
and a small collection of favourite v
chiefly romances, plays, and poetry.

This room had been styled by the dor
“young Madam's study,” to distinguish i
the neat and comfortable bed-room ad
which was “young Madam's chamber :” fo
she had been wont to retire, to read, to w
play on the harpsichord or lute—both of
instruments

bilities and apprehensions, over a new volume from France, or a new sonata from Italy.

But the chief delight of Mary Lepel was to retire to a place so sacred from intrusion, with a young friend of her own sex, particularly one who had been her associate at Minerva House, there to indulge in reminiscences of their school career, and above all there to repose a mutual confidence; and after listening to a detailed account of her friend's adventures, thoughts, and feelings with reference to one all absorbing subject to the female heart, to express her own.

The little heart of the Brigadier's daughter was a complete store-house of romance; but the most romantic of her ideas was her complete identification of herself with her favourite heroines, whom she longed to imitate in the strangeness and mystery of their adventures. Anything that happened in the slightest degree out of the way, she regarded as being enveloped in mystery, and whatever occurred to her in the least to vary her customary routine, she was eager to look upon as an adventure. These impressions always formed a prominent feature in her confidences; and now that she had got with her the best beloved of all her bosom friends, Mary Bellenden, she was burning with

humour to listen. She had her own dispose of; and as she was the elder and so much more of the world, and more finished her education at St. Omer, and come from Paris, of course it was but should claim precedence. Indeed, of riority, she appeared so sensible, that could mistake the patronising tone and as by the young beauty towards her junior compassion she seemed to feel for her and not having had the advantages she possessed.

And then the use she made of her familiar French phrases and gestures, in estimation gave her so vast a superiority over her friend—who, although a tolerable scholar, rarely ventured upon a foreign conversation, and knew nothing of the use of shrugs and the thousand and one —

young lady, as she sat opposite the daughter of her host knitting a purse, whilst the other was as busily employed at some worsted work; "you are very much improved in your face and figure; but *pardonnez-moi*, you have the most barbarous notion of dressing yourself, child." Here followed an elevation of the shoulders to the ears.

"Why, what can there be so mightily amiss in my dress?" innocently inquired the Brigadier's daughter, glancing at her neat and not ungraceful though somewhat formal morning robe.

"Amiss, child!" echoed her companion, with a peculiar elevation of the eye-brows, as she glanced rapidly from her feet to her head. "*Ma foi*, every thing is amiss. *Par exemple*, look at your head-dress—did ever any one see any thing so abominable!"

Now the head-dress of Mary Lepel, as described in a preceding page, was certainly far from being unbecoming, for the beautiful silken tresses tied with ribbon, produced an effect that would have delighted Sir Godfrey Kneller, and which had already occasioned a tolerably extensive creation of fugitive verse from various as yet secret admirers.

"*Voilà*, look at mine!" exclaimed the fair

told, she did not quite like it, and had times gazed at the curious mass that rose on the head of her beautiful friend, wondering what it was composed of; as the powder quite covered the substance on which it was laid.

Mary Bellenden gave her head the same shake in the world, as she again raised it to that of her lovely schoolfellow; but it was a different shake, that in Paris at least, was of great consequence. “*Ma foi*, at Versailles with such a wig you would be as much stared at as a native. *Va te faire coiffer.*”

Mary Lepel promised, if her father approved, she would lose no time in having her hair arranged according to the French fashion.

“*Oui, oui, ma petite,*” cried her companion, waving her white hand, such as she had seen employed by Parisian *belles*. “It is now done, be assured. And now for your dress

Now any indifferent English spectator would have been ready to assert, that the graceful figure of Mary Lepel was as well set off as her beautiful hair; but he of course would not have been so well informed on the important subject of the very last new fashion, to which ladies must conform in every article of personal decoration, as Mary Bellenden.

“*Voilà !*” exclaimed the young lady rising from her seat and turning herself round for the better inspection of her companion. Mary Bellenden displayed a form, beautifully fitted at the bust, with a very long stomacher, and swelling out from the waist as if her drapery hung over a barrel or a drum-head. She paced up and down, drawing aside her skirts to display a pair of red morocco shoes, with heels so high, Mary Lepel wondered how she could keep her footing.

“This is how a lady of quality should appear,” she added, walking back with a well satisfied air to her seat; “and I must insist, child, that you dress as becomes your station. *Ma foi*, I wonder what Philip Dormer would have said had he seen you at Paris?”

“Philip Dormer!” cried the Brigadier’s daughter with animation.

“No, I have not seen him ; but I he father say, the Prince of Wales was partial and had lately appointed him to a situation Household. He was one of your admirer in Paris, I suppose, Mary ?”

“Of course, child. *Il a bien de l'esprit* must confess I like witty men. I met him times. He declared himself quite smitten to give up the ghost *pour l'amour*. I found him agreeable enough : indeed he was monstrous attentive to me, vastly polite, my most devoted, that ; but I did not think it necessary to love just then, so I only amused myself with him, *pour passer le temps*.”

It may perhaps be necessary to inform the reader that the fair Bellenden exaggerated as to the extent of her acquaintance with the handsome Philip Dormer—a failing not uncommon with her dear sex, when ment

Philip Dormer was a very elegant young man of high connexions, his nearest relative, Lord Stanhope, being one of the most influential ministers of George I., and his grandfather being the Earl of Chesterfield; and although rumours respecting his wildness and extravagance had already got into general circulation, they were not likely at this particular period to prevent any young lady of fashion from desiring to have him at her feet, or where it was safe, to boast of her having brought him there.

“I’m sure it must be very delightful to make such a conquest,” said the Brigadier’s daughter, with a sound very much like a sigh; “but I heard some one say at dinner last week—I think it was the new Dean of St. Patrick’s; I’m not sure it wasn’t Mr. Pope—that he was known to associate a good deal with that abominable Duke of Wharton, and that singular Earl of Peterborough, and other reckless characters, with whom he joined in all sorts of mad frolics, and shocking—”

“*Ma foi*,” cried her companion, laughingly, “he told me all about it; he confessed to me he was a member of the Hell-fire club, and had been employed as Provost Martial to the Emperor of

by a common person, would have brought
head into the pillory; but with people of quality
such things are mere *bagatelles*, child."

"I suppose, Mr. Dormer was not your
admirer, Mary?" inquired her young school
fellow archly.

"La, child, how you talk!" exclaimed
her friend quickly. "I had a score of them who
remained in Paris."

"A score, Mary?" inquired her friend, looking
up with some astonishment.

"*Oui, ma petite*, a score at the least: I
say there might not have been a few more.
there was the Duc d'Orléans"—

"The Duc d'Orléans!" cried the Briget
daughter, with increased wonder.

"Oh, the Duke was the most ardent of
her schoolfellow replied, with a little smile."

“I had seven abbés, three bishops and one cardinal,” said the fair Bellenden, scarcely noticing the interruption; “but if I had a partiality for any one of these reverend gentlemen, *ma foi*, it ought to have been for the good Abbé Dubois, for he was the greatest rogue of them all. He introduced himself to me as the Duke’s agent, and whilst displaying the monstrous intensity of his master’s passion, he made the most prodigious demonstrations of his own.”

“What a wretch!” burst from her indignant companion, who apparently could not reconcile herself to such priestly devotion, “I should be terrified to death if I fell among such infamous people.”

“*Je ne les crains point*,” replied the other with a shrug of much meaning; “then I had five captains, three counts, two marquises, one general—and let me remember—*en vérité, ma chère*, I had six judges.”

“Six judges!” cried out her friend at the top of her voice.

“*Sans doute*, six judges,” quietly responded her schoolfellow. “Every one makes love in France, *ma mignonne*; from the prince on the throne to

shall most effectually recommend the
their female acquaintance."

"You must really have had son
dinary adventures among so singular a

"Adventures! la, child! I have
tures out of all possibility of countin
seven times designedly been made
way, that I might be put in the right c
unknown adorers, wanting an intro
have five times been rescued by rob
many devoted swains anxious to te
devotion; twice saved from fire, and
drowning. I have ten times been run
four times suddenly found myself
strange rooms in mansions where I
visiting. I have been the cause of fit
six *lettres de cachet*, drove five despair

"It's wonderful how you could have escaped so many perils," observed the other almost breathless with astonishment.

"*Ma foi*, such matters have ceased to be wonderful in France," coolly replied her friend.

It might in some respects be true, that the picture the fair scholar of St Omer had submitted to her youthful friend, was a little overdrawn; nevertheless, it cannot but be admitted, that the presence of a very young and beautiful woman at the gay capital of France at this period was attended with many risks, not only to herself, but to the numberless highly susceptible gentlemen who might happen to behold her; and it is not improbable that the extreme loveliness of the fair Bellenden occasioned her a greater display of gallantry than may have been quite agreeable to her. We entertain, however, just the slightest suspicion in the world, that for many of the features in the very lively description we have just given, the gay beauty was indebted to her own imagination.

She, however, as if she thought she had not as yet half sufficiently astonished her inexperienced companion, launched into narratives of the most

other and occasionally a few together, doing things which more and more her unsophisticated listener.

Poor Mary Lepel never thought of word of these marvellous statements ; schoolfellow proceeded with a happy mixing real names and real places with the most apocryphal character, she think her favourite heroines had not half the strange and wonderful adventures dear friend had. At last when wonder excited no further, Mary Bellenden a sudden check in her revelations.

“ But now, child,” said she, in a different tone, “ it is your turn ; I must hear *your* adventures. Indeed, *ma belle*, I have been dying to hear of them ever since I entered the house.”

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was none. There was, however, a vast contrast in the manner in which these confidential communications were made.

The more accomplished beauty, who could boast of her stay in Paris, entered with the most happy audacity into the relation of anecdotes and incidents, that the other could not listen to without becoming bewildered with wonder and alarm ; while she, when her turn came to be narrator, as though overpowered with a sense of the importance of what she was going to communicate, went hesitatingly and tremulously on with her story, which when uttered, could not but be thought extremely insignificant, when compared to the extraordinary declarations that had just preceded it.

If the truth must be told, the modest and romantic little mistress of Petersham Manor had but very little to confide. She expatiated with considerable emphasis on sundry squeezes of the hand she had received from some of the most agreeable of her father's guests, and gave a long and circumstantial account of the marked admiration, during the whole of every dinner, of a sea-captain ; but the squeezes were far more cordial than amorous, and the other instance was still more delusive, for the poor captain happened to

attention of this new admirer, his gaze upon the good things on his plate.

Mary Lepel then went into a long catalogue of compliments and attentions, and gave sketches of the various attractive features of different gentlemen to whom she was indebted. After these, sundry neatly folded sheets of writing paper were produced, which she carefully opened, the fair Lepel with a concealed expression of extreme gratification to read. These were various poetical productions, which had been conveyed to her by different times, mostly by some singular channels. Some were of the usual description—expressed in flowing compliments, and laboured metaphors to the party addressed, and infinite respect and expressible devotion of the party addressed. Some were rather more

"*Ma foi !* is this all you have got to tell me?" inquired Mary Bellenden, with her most significant shrug, secretly pitying her young friend for the barrenness of her reminiscences. "What a vast deal you have got to say about nothing, child! Why, if I had began to tell you of the hand-pressings, the looks, the compliments, and the verses I have received, I should despair of ever getting to the end. *Ah, ma petite*, it is easy to see you have not received part of your education at a French convent, or you would have laid no stress on such trifles; but have you nothing else to tell me—no adventure of any sort?"

"Yes, dear Mary, I have had a very singular adventure," she replied, humiliated by her friend's depreciation of her little interesting revelations.

"A most singular adventure, indeed."

"Pray let us have it. I am impatient to hear what it is about. *Quelle aventure vous est-il arrivée ?*"

"It is very mysterious, Mary."

"So much the better. An adventure is nothing without a sufficiency of mystery. *Commencez, commencez, ma mignonne.*"

At this urging the Brigadier's daughter, with

vegetables as to their readiness purposes; and that every day for days, directly she entered the way along the wall where the best peacocks heard the sounds of a flute, evident from the other side. She could not find it, it was so exquisite a performance, concealed musician played the most touching airs—it was as sweet as the song of the nightingale. Directed the walk he commenced, and at the moment she quitted it.

She owned she thought it very strange indeed; but the strangest part was, yesterday at the same hour, she had heard the same beautiful playing; but when she listened a short time it appeared as

stretch of imagination to satisfy herself for whom the music was intended.

To Mary Lepel the mystery of it lay in the extreme care with which the musician kept out of sight, and in his managing to reserve his performances till she entered that particular walk: and as she poured out her marvellous narrative to her confidante, who could scarcely keep her countenance, she could not avoid indulging in innumerable conjectures as to who was the concealed musician, why he took such measures to attract her attention, and what was his object in continuing this mysterious serenade.

Her fair companion heard her out with admirable patience, and when she had concluded burst into a loud fit of laughter. The Brigadier's daughter felt satisfied that these periodical performances betokened some very extraordinary adventure, and she was completely under the impression that she was about to become a heroine, worthy of the pages of "Le Grand Cyrus."

"*Ma foi*, you call this an adventure, do you!" exclaimed Mary Bellenden, as soon as her mirth had a little subsided. "Why child, before I had

“ Not the slightest.”

“ Have you never attempted to it was, by causing the other side of explored?”

“ No. I have never mentioned any one but yourself.”

“ I suppose you would like to admirer, eh, *ma petite* !”

“ I am dying to hear who he is.”

“ There is nothing so easy. It to the hour: let us go together into I doubt not it will repay us for the

A very few minutes after this they were seen walking leisurely together on the gravel walks of the Brigadier's romantic little daughter convinced of entering on an adventure full of the

expressive features of Mary Bellenden were lit up with a saucy sense of her own power, whilst the fair complexion and child-like innocence of features of the unsophisticated Mary Lepel, were full of interest and anxiety.

As yet they had met nothing and heard nothing, and as they turned into the walk beside the indicated wall, and could distinguish nothing in the most remote degree approaching the expected serenade, both began to fear they should return as wise as they came. They had proceeded, however, but a very few steps, when they came to a sudden halt.

“Hush!” exclaimed the Brigadier’s daughter, her little heart palpitating as though she had unexpectedly found herself in a position of extreme danger. The sounds of a flute were heard, the instrument played with singular delicacy and taste. The friends listened. The performer was evidently on the other side of the wall, which was of a height that effectually screened him from observation on the garden side.

“Hush,” again exclaimed Mary Lepel in a whisper, “he is going to sing.” And then in clear rich tones a voice commenced singing the following words :

“ Come tell me what shepherd is most to your min
As we watch the young lambs climb the side of
“ Oh Daphne!” the rosy cheeked Chloe replied,
And she held down her head half ashamed to cor
“ If Granny would cease so to frown and to chide
More happy should I be than I can express.”
“ Oh,” said Daphne to Chloe, “ ne’er mind the go
When old folks were young they have felt just t

“ I first met the youth at a dance on the green.
And thought, as he moved on so fair and so tall,
There were plenty of handsome young swains to be
But Lubin, dear Lubin, was flow’r of them all.
He asked me to dance, and he led me along,
With such rich silken curls waving over his brow
Oh, Daphne, though Granny declares it was wrong
I could not help feeling, I can’t tell you how.
“ Oh,” said Daphne to Chloe, “ ne’er mind the old
When she was as young she’d a heart like your o’
“ When next I met Lubin ’twas down in the grove.

Oh, Daphne, I wish Granny wouldn't so scold,

Because in the grove I met Lubin alone."

"Oh," said Daphne to Chloe, "ne'er mind the good dame,

When she was as young she has done just the same."

Mary Bellenden gazed around her with her quick intelligent eyes as the song commenced, and soon remarked a ladder that had recently been employed by the gardener to enable him to trail some of the wall-fruit. She pointed it out to her friend, and presently these beautiful girls were seen quietly bearing the rude ladder between them; and then they placed it against the wall, as near as possible to the spot whence the sounds were proceeding.

Mary Bellenden offered to hold the foot of the ladder whilst her friend ascended to take a peep over the wall; this arrangement the Brigadier's daughter did not seem to approve at all, till her friend convinced her that as it was her own adventure, she ought to take the most prominent place in it.

At last her timidity gave way before the assurances of her more experienced friend, and she ascended the spokes of the ladder almost overcome by her feelings. She was fairly embarked in an adventure—the first adventure she had ever

palpitations became more rapid. She could not have supported herself in this critical position, but for her profound conviction that nothing in *Le Grand Cyrus* ever could be half so romantic an adventure, as her present elevation on the gardener's ladder. Her concealed admirer ought to be a Prince Oroondates, at least, to repay her for what she was undergoing. The idea that he *might* be such a character, gave her sufficient nerve to mount a step higher.

Suddenly the music ceased, and as her head rose above the wall, so a head arose on the other side—Mary Lepel gave a scream, and found herself in the arms—oh, the horror to her romantic notions—of James, the new footman!

CHAPTER V.

TURNING THE TABLES.

Lives there a man so dull and stupid
As not to know the power of Cupid
Where'er the sun his journey races
That god enjoys his sacred places.

“ No, I never shall be able to endure that impudent fellow again !” exclaimed the daughter petulantly, as she flung her chair in the breakfast room.

“ Nonsense, child !” replied her mother, if the truth might be told, could not be amused at the termination of the scene.
“ Take my advice. *ma netite*. do not

his insolence. But what did he say to you?—I'm sure he made some sort of speech; but I could not of course hear so well at the bottom of the ladder, as you could at the top; and when I saw the old gardener coming, I was obliged to give the alarm."

"Oh, I was so frightened, I hardly know what the wretch said; but I believe it was about his mistaking me for one of the maids. I, however, lost no time in descending the ladder at your signal, and getting away from the place as fast as I could, without troubling myself about the fellow's apologies."

"I don't think, in mistaking you for Mrs. Kitty, he paid you any compliment, *ma mignonne*."

"Deuce take him, and his compliments too!" cried the young lady in a pet, starting up from her seat, and beginning to pace the room. "His impudence really is unbearable: I never felt so vexed in my life."

"*Ma foi*, it is but an unsatisfactory beginning for you, I must confess, child," quietly observed the other. "But these sort of accidents will occur. In France, they think nothing of them;

ture of Mary Lepel had received a
Her imagination had played her
trick, and all her romantic associatio
sent to the right about, in the m
and undignified way possible. She
vest her mind of certain apprehensio
affair came to the ears of the great D
would she think of her?"

She took counsel of her more expe
panion, who laughed away her fear
spoke of that important personage,
ridicule and contempt. Very much
at this, the Brigadier's daughter mad
acquainted with the Duchess's rece
the humiliation it brought with it; a
her of her father's expectations an
that dreaded lady's good offices : at
Bellenden, with that happy audacity
irresistible with her, laughed still mor

Much confidential conversation followed between the two school-fellows, in which Mary Lepel learned that her friend entertained expectations of obtaining some situation about the person of the Princess of Wales—her father having promised to exercise his influence in procuring for her such an appointment. Upon no firmer basis than existed in this prospect, the fair Bellenden presently erected a most agreeable structure, which did no less credit to her ingenuity, than to her ambition.

In this way an hour passed pleasantly, and Mary Lepel was rapidly recovering from her vexation, when at her companion's wish, she rang the bell for lunch. Very little time elapsed before the door was opened, and James, the new footman entered, bearing a well covered tray. It might have been supposed that he would have exhibited some sense of his delinquency, instead of which he bore a most steady countenance, and proceeded to place the things on the table, as though he was perfectly unconscious of having given offence.

Mary Lepel, apparently, took no notice of him. She sat back in her chair, with a countenance eloquent with indignation; but she neither looked

mistake her fair friend had been undesirable juxta position with hi of the wall.

Whilst he was placing the tray Mary Bellenden approached him suddenly she turned her back to him, a handkerchief to her mouth, as though a sudden burst of laughter. Whether the silliness of her friend's adventure with her, or the foppish appearance of the footman, was so ludicrous, she could not resist the impulse to laugh; certain it is she made a powerful effort to recover her composure.

The man was about to withdraw when he had entered, when Mary Bellenden, putting on a very grave, and indeed severe aspect, turned round, and as to his astonishment, suddenly addressed

dently striving to put a restraint upon her feelings.

“ An it please you, Madam Bellenden,” he answered quite at his ease, “ I had obtained a ladder for the purpose of getting a bird’s nest, that was at the top.”

“ Did you take your mistress for one of the young, or for one of the old birds, sirrah ?” demanded his questioner sternly ; and the little foot patted the carpet with increased force.

“ An it please you, Madam Bellenden,” answered the man, still without the slightest discomposure, “ as I was getting up to the top of the wall, I heard a voice, which I believed to be that of my fellow servant, Mrs. Kitty, though I could not hear well enough, to distinguish what was said, and I became aware that some one was ascending a ladder on the garden side. Believing it was Mrs. Kitty, in an idle frolic I suddenly darted up, and caught hold of her.”

The little foot patted more vigorously than ever, and the beautiful face grew a shade or two darker in its expression. Mary Bellenden seemed to hesitate ; but she was only forming a determination. The man was perfectly respectful ; his affectations seemed reserved for the servant’s

ing, fellow," she asked in the sternest
she could employ, "to commence your
ings by a performance on the flute,
the singing of a love ditty?"

The little foot did not proceed at quite
a pace, and the expression of the
countenance changed from indignation
to sulkiness. The man, however, did not
answer. Indeed, he looked as though
he did not comprehend the question. It was
with an increased severity of manner. At
a steady countenance, and in a way
respectful, he said: "I humbly beg,
surely there must be some mistake."

"None at all, fellow, none at all
both the song and the instrument,"
Bellenden, very sharply.

"And it please you, Madam
answered the man with an unal-

much as might suffice, for a chorus of ‘Derry Down.’”

The little foot grew much more quiet, and the pretty face wore an expression of wonder, that thrust out all the indignation. Her friend, however, was far from being satisfied, even by so decisive an answer. Nevertheless, she laboured under the difficulty of having no means of disproving it. She fixed her gaze upon James; but James bore it unflinchingly.

“Mark me, sirrah!” she exclaimed, sharply, “mind what you are about. Another such a liberty with your master’s daughter, and your livery shall be torn off your back, and your impertinence cooled in the nearest horse-pond. Kneel down, and ask her pardon.”

“No, dear Mary, there is no occasion,” said the now pacified young lady. “Pray, send him about his business. I don’t want to hear anything more on the subject. I beg he may leave the room.”

“Kneel, fellow!” was the stern mandate of her more experienced friend. Without another word the man walked to the place where his young mistress sat, and knelt by her chair; not on both knees, but, as though he could not avoid his

towards the suppliant, which convinced her, he was much better than she thought it was possible for any to be.

The expression of Mary Bellende were now anything but stern. She regarded the position in which she had two persons before her, as particularly amusing, but whether her amusement was at the expense of the mistress of the mansion, or her own, we cannot say. Not a word was said by either party, for the culprit seemed unable to find words sufficiently expressive of his pardon; and neither of the beauties dared to interrupt his reflections. At last, he could not resist the impulse to throw himself into second hand airs and graces, he had with such effect on his fellow servants that he began :

whence it proceeded, to their astonishment and no slight embarrassment, beheld the Brigadier, who had entered the room unperceived.

The footman was on his feet in a moment, and met the angry and bewildered stare of his master, who looked from him to his daughter, and from his daughter to him, as though he hardly believed the evidence of his own senses.

“What in the name of Heaven does all this mean?” he thundered out.

Mary Bellenden came forward. There was mischief gleaming out of her very sparkling eyes, as she approached the bewildered Brigadier, his embarrassed daughter, and the astonished culprit, who possibly would rather have had his master remain in ignorance of the accusation that had been brought against him.

“I am sorry to tell you, Brigadier General Lepel,” said his fair guest, striving to assume a grave aspect, “that your appearance here is quite *mal-à-propos*. You have disturbed the course of justice.”

The Brigadier looked puzzled, his daughter gave a look of earnest appeal to her schoolfellow, and James seemed as if he would have felt a great deal more comfortable out of the room.

mercy as it was his first offence, and given up to justice it would be the ruin and the disgrace of his family."

Had a thunderbolt fallen in the mid it could not have excited more astoni all her companions than did this ann The supposed robber gazed on his though his ears must have deceived young lady looked with reproach not with alarm at her friend; whilst the glanced from one to the other with an of countenance in which rage, mortific wonder seemed struggling for the mast

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed he, he could find words; "has Petersh been harbouring a house-breaker? I have had the audacity, rascal, to plunde dier General? Here Rackstraw! Jol man! Sandie! Pompey!" he cried at t

the summons immediately, rushing in together with alarm in every face, as if they fancied the house was on fire.

“Strip the Lepel livery off this scoundrel!” exclaimed the Brigadier, with every symptom of being in a towering passion, “and then give him into the hands of the constable. Hanging’s too good for him.”

All except Pompey hurried to do the bidding of their master, and he did nothing but stand at the door and grin, apparently intent upon shewing his teeth to the very last in the set.

“Stop, Brigadier!” cried Mary Bellenden, “I insist upon it you do not take the matter out of our court. The criminal is in our custody, and before I acknowledge his guilt, you must allow me to examine him apart. He may probably have accomplices, and I may be able to induce him to confess when their appearance may be expected.”

“Very true, Madam Bellenden,” replied the Brigadier, who had long made it a point never to dispute the will of a lady. Then added to his domestics: “You may retire to the next room, where you can be in readiness, when required. I

he had already contracted a considerable degree of ill will. As they left the apartment door, the Brigadier retired with his usual companion.

Mary Bellenden looked to see that the doors were closed, and then signed for the carriage to follow her to the window. It might be thought that so youthful a female would not have liked being left alone with a man who had just been charged with a crime affecting the honour of his country; but so far from exhibiting any trace of alarm, her beautiful features were lit up with the glow of mirth, in which by the way, no shadow of mischief evidently mingled.

As for the presumed criminal, so far from any degree of annoyance, he seemed scarcely less impressed with the disagreeableness, and the peril of his position. The lady was too much occupied to break silence, which she did not do, he

parently much to his surprise, she addressed him in a low voice to the following purport :

“ Philip Dormer, your disguise has been penetrated.”

“ Stab my vitals, Madam Bellenden !” exclaimed the other, “ if you did discover me, there was no reason for your playing me such a scurvy trick. I am the first of the Chesterfields who ever took to the profession of house-breaking.”

“ *Ma foi*, so you are, I have no doubt,” observed the young lady, mightily pleased with her companion’s chagrin, “ and I believe you are the first of your family, who ever put on another man’s livery ?”

This was a home thrust, and the gentleman so felt it ; for he sagaciously held his tongue.

“ Philip Dormer,” she continued with as grave a face as she could assume, “ I am obliged to tell you, that you are in a very disagreeable predicament. Stealing in a dwelling house—”

“ Curse me, Madam Bellenden, what’s this you say ?” exclaimed the assumed footman with an air of dignity which completely broke down her gravity.

“ Stealing in a dwelling-house by a servant is a hanging matter,” observed she, “ and I do not

emphasis, " I never dreamt of degrading myself of a straw."

"How are you to prove that?"
quickly, "the accusation brought whatever you may say and do to will in the first place lead to your residence in anything but comfortable the county jail."

"County jail, Madam Bellenden! will soon put a stop to that."

"Mighty good, Sir; but as you be treated as an impostor, any conversation with my Lord Stanhope would be question. You would be obliged to till your trial came on, which might the next six months."

"Cursed unlucky! Deucedly provoked the dickens could have induced you"

“On my honour, Madam Bellenden, this is intolerable. Deuce take you and your jail too; you are carrying your jest too far.”

“I rather think you will find it carried a good deal farther. I protest to you, I doubt very much it will stop till it comes to Tyburn. There is one way left you to escape the very unpleasant position in which you find yourself.”

“Ah, indeed! then I shall be vastly obliged to you to tell it me.”

“*Ma foi*, it is merely to make me acquainted with your purpose in having recourse to your present disguise, and getting surreptitiously into the house of Brigadier General Lepel.”

“Purpose! faith what purpose could I have beyond an idle frolic?”

“I know your frolics; but this adventure is the result of no idle frolic I am convinced. However, it is high time I put an end to this conference, and give you up to your impatient friends outside, who are so anxious to pay you every attention on your way to prison.”

“Prison!—stab my vitals, Madam Bellenden!”

“Dear now! I must tell the Brigadier I give you over to the civil power to be dealt with as

~~unheard of.~~
“Handcuffs! I tell you I will not
such an unheard of indignity.”

Mary Bellenden made a move
about to summon the Brigadier.

“Positively this is too bad of you
pose I must tell!” he exclaimed hu-

“There is no help for you. You
not attempt to deceive me or to do
thing. Let me know all, and let me
quickly; and I’ll promise to get you
of this extremely awkward position,
you into it!”

“Well, that’s civil of you, positive
vitals, I don’t know for which to thank
—making me out a pilferer of palt
spoons—or freeing me from the con-
such an infamous accusation.”

brought you here, and how you contrived to obtain your present position in the establishment."

"Well then to be honest with you, I was sent here by the Prince of Wales."

"I thought as much."

"He is mighty curious to know what sort of a person is young Madam Lepel, as there is some talk of her being attached to the suite of his Royal Highness's consort."

"The Prince wished to know whether she was likely to please him as well as the Princess?"

"Egad you've hit it, Madam Bellenden. He wished me to observe the young lady as closely as possible, without betraying myself or my mission. So finding t'other day, in the course of my inquiries, that a footman was wanted, with the assistance of Pompey, our Prince of Darkness, whom I well bribed, I took upon myself that character, in which I easily established myself in the house; and by his doing the principal duties of my office I managed to pass for a very creditable member of the establishment."

"Did the Prince commission you to serenade your master's daughter by the side of a garden wall?" inquired the lady, with a most provoking

air. The question appeared rather difficult to answer, and the assumed footman looked a little unprepared for it; but just at this moment the Brigadier and his daughter re-entered the room.

“*Ma foi*, was ever such a stupid mistake, Brigadier!” exclaimed Mary Bellenden, approaching her host with well-feigned concern, “I protest to you I thought the man had bad intentions; but he has convinced me, poor honest creature, that I was deceived. Dear now, I am quite shocked at the wrong I have done him. He is a very good sort of a person, I haven’t the slightest doubt, and has highly respectable friends. Such an accusation might be the death of his poor mother:—a worthy old soul, who washes for my Lord Mayor.”

An execration was about to burst from the lips of the high-born favourite of a Prince, at being given such an ignoble origin; but he possessed sufficient self-control to swallow his indignation.

“And his father,” continued the malicious beauty with the most intense enjoyment of the mischief she was causing, “who is well known as a sober and industrious chairman—or link-boy—which is it, James?” she suddenly inquired, turn-

ing round upon the disguised son of Lord Stanhope, whose rising wrath he was making immense efforts to keep down.

“Oh—ah ! yes, Madam Bellenden. Chairman, I thank you humbly,” exclaimed Philip Dormer, struggling to keep up his assumed character ; then muttered to himself, “Curse me, if her impudence isn’t unbearable !”

“Yes, as sober and industrious a chairman as any in Marylebone,” repeated the lady with the most provoking gravity. “Was it Marylebone, or St. Giles’s, James ?” she asked, again turning to see the effect of her bantering.

“Oh, St. James’s, an it please you, Madam,” said the assumed footman, with no slight difficulty.

“*Ma foi !* St. James’s, was it ? Well, I am monstrously afraid he would never hold up his head afterwards. So, Brigadier, I must request you will not suffer this foolish blunder of mine to injure the young man’s prospects, or disturb the peace of mind of his respectable parents.”

The Brigadier was not so astonished at this sudden change in the opinion of his fair visitor as might have been anticipated, for he had been closely questioning his daughter, whose examina-

particularly influenced him in another
the shape of that attention to dress at
which he himself so greatly affected.

“I regret, James, this mistake
occurred,” said the Brigadier. “You
think any more about it.”

The pretended James bowed respectfully
was about to leave the apartment
Bellenden stopped him, and put a good
hand.

“This will be an addition to
young man,” she observed, with the
patroness, “and will enable you to accustom
to the comforts of your honest parents.”

“Stab my vitals, Madam!” exclaimed
Dormer perfectly unable to restrain
this new affront; but as the Brigadier
suddenly round, having partly overheard the
situation, he thought it best to defer his

ment who had crowded to the door, where one of them had for some time been busily engaged taking a reconnoissance at the key-hole for the benefit of the rest.

They had evidently gained but an imperfect idea of what had served so completely to change the aspect of affairs, and on his re-appearance among them they regarded their fellow servant with a reserve very different to their previous cordiality. Mr. Rackstraw was more than usually stately; John Coachman anything but communicative; Mrs. Molly was sullen and snappish; Mrs. Kitty and Lucy sat at another part of the table, and conversed with each other only in whispers; whilst Sandie every now and then gave utterance to some pithy proverb respecting honesty being the best policy, that lost nothing, in his opinion, from the sarcastic tone in which it was spoken.

The only cheerful individual of the party was little Pompey, who exercised his features in the broad grin with a pertinacity that looked as though he knew no other expression of countenance; and when the caustic Sandie expressed some reflection about the necessity of every one locking up his things, who had reason to doubt

their safety, he burst out into such a laugh as caused him to be called to order by the stately taciturn Mr. Rackstraw.

Philip Dormer paid no attention to this evident disrelish of his society. He whistled with a vacant air, and sometimes drummed the table; now then casting a glance at his companions; and more amused than disconcerted at their stupid avoidance of it. At last the ludicrousness of his position in being sent to Coventry by such associates overpowered his sense of the annoyance he had endured upstairs, and he gave vent to his mirth in laughter louder and longer than that Pompey had been—which of course caused a fresh display of the little negro's very white teeth.

At this indecorum, the respectable butler frowned, the coachman hemmed, and the gentleman gave the table a sharp thump with his fist. The assumed footman rose from his seat, and without paying the slightest attention to the males, addressed a suitable apology to the females for forgetting himself in their company, which was expressed in a style that ought to have won respect from the rudest savages; but Mrs. Medley deigned no other reply than a toss of her head.

and Mrs. Kitty and Lucy looked as though they had not heard a word of it. He then quitted the servant's hall.

"Couldn't have supposed it possible," observed John Coachman, looking after the supposed culprit with no slight degree of concern expressed in his honest features. "I shouldn't have thought there was a bit of vice in him. Never seed any animal as looked less to require a warranty."

"Looks are deceptive, John Coachman," was the pithy reply of the cautious Mr. Rackstraw.

"I know'd he was no good," said the indignant gardener. "Such skip-jack fine fellows are never to be trusted out of your sight, and are fit for nothing but to turn the heads of a parcel of weak-minded women-folk, who havn't the sense to respect a man as is honester and usefuller."

"Marry come up!" exclaimed Mrs. Molly, her red face turning to scarlet, "I'd have you to know, Mr. Cabbage-grower, I'm no more weak-minded than yourself, though I am a woman; and as for honesty, I shouldn't advise them to brag of it as sells their master's fruit unbeknown to him."

"Honester, indeed!" added Mrs. Kitty scorn-

fully, who also felt the insinuation. "Charging double for his seeds, isn't a bit better in my opinion, than making free with master's plate."

"And as for usefuller," joined in Lucy with a particularly contemptuous glance, "what use some people could be put to, I really can't pretend to say—unless it be as a scarecrow."

Poor Sandie knew of old, it was a hopeless matter to attempt to answer either one of his opponents; nevertheless, the charges now made against him, and the laugh that was raised at his expense, exasperated him extremely. He was about to retort when he thought of the odds against him, and prudently held his tongue.

"For my own part," added Mrs. Molly, "I can't help saying I pities the young man. Nobody knows what temptation he might have had, that is to say provided he took any thing; for it ain't quite clear to me as he did, though I is weak-minded."

The last words were given with especial emphasis, and a look intended to annihilate her fellow-servant. Her observation brought to the recollection of all, the want of anything like proof of the imputed dishonesty of the new footman, and this led to one or two observations made in his defence.

Mr. Rackstraw, with his customary prudence, hoped James would be able to clear his character. John Coachman ventured upon an anecdote, shewing the facility with which false charges might be made against respectable upper servants, particularly coachmen ; and the women one and all thought it a burning shame, so well behaved and genteel a young man should have had his good name taken away. Sandie dared not venture to express his thoughts, but he was fully satisfied that hanging ought to be the fate of such an empty coxcomb, as his opponents were so ready to befriend.

As for Pompey, he had slipped out of the room unobserved, therefore there was no way of judging how he stood affected towards the person, whose merits and demerits they were so busily discussing ; but had they seen the grin on his ebony face, as he was at that moment assisting to divest Philip Dormer of his livery, preparatory to that gentleman's taking his departure from Petersham Manor, they need not have been in any doubt as to their dusky friend's sentiments.

Notwithstanding that the majority of the Brigadier's establishment were more nearly agreed as

state of things below stairs, but little of the same gloom prevailed.

The delight of Mary Lepel, on he had got disguised in the house, wa She seemed as though she could expressing her wonder, that the he and accomplished Philip Dormer, sought to obtain her acquaintance in manner. She never once thought it recollect that he was attached to her Her first adventure now assumed a aspect to what it had, when her ron so rude a shock, on the supposed di menial admirer. She remembered wi tisfaction, that throughout *Le Gran* was no instance of a heroine being lover disguised as her servant, who on the flute, and sung delightful so behind a garden wall. Then she th

Howe and Fanny Meadows, expressly to tell them of her extraordinary good fortune.

In all this exultation, the Brigadier's daughter was not without certain feelings of disquietude, as to how she should behave to her disguised admirer, so as not to excite the suspicions of her father or of the servants. There seemed to be a good deal of danger and difficulty in the case, and she was incessant in her applications to her more experienced friend, as to what she should do.

Mary Bellenden, who had told her dear friend only just as much as she thought proper, laughed at her fears and referred to her Parisian reminiscences for numberless similar cases ; at the same time cautioning her that it was a mere frolic of Philip Dormer's such as he was being continually engaged in, so that she ought not to think any thing of it. She was fully convinced that now he was known, especially as the discovery had been attended by such disagreeable circumstances, he would remain but a very short time in his present quarters ; but of this she said nothing to her dear friend.

The truth of her conjectures was soon made manifest ; for in the morning the whole house was in confusion. James had disappeared. As

began to lurk a terrible suspicion, used fellow-servant, unable to hold disgrace, had gone and made away Mrs. Kitty almost immediately left. Her feelings had been so touched by the fate of the unfortunate James that she no longer stay, where she had lived so long in his company.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE I. IN HIS CABINET.

This has often made me compare the virtues of great men to your large China jars: they make a fine shew, and are ornamental even to a chimney. One would by the bulk they appear in, and the value that is set upon them, think they might be very useful; but look into a thousand of them, and you will find nothing in them but dust and cobwebs.

BERNARD MANDEVILLE.

ROYAL palaces are usually looked upon as the head quarters of refinement and good breeding, of elegance and luxury; there all that ingenuity can devise, and unlimited resources procure, may ordinarily be found, striving to give to prodigality the aspect of good taste; and whatever is most attractive in decoration, whether it belong to the chamber or its inhabitants, is called into requisition to confer on both a manifest superiority as far as regards appearance, to all other people and all other places.

ceremonies. Here, personal ad
insisted on as cardinal virtues, and
style of dress is your only morali
therefore becomes a positive necessit
a science, that deserves to be held
never ending study.

Among all the great potentates of
grace of the women and the dignity
who constituted the Court, were p
favour no one thought of challengi
before the first quarter of the eightee
had been concluded, the influence of
tationous grandeur, and seductive beauty
mount in most of the principal capit
of Louis XIV of France, and of A
Saxony, it was carried to an extent, t
once the boast and the shame of the a

But it was reserved for the monarc
land to possess a Court, where there
splendour. grace. nor dignity. when

and intellectual sense. The Elector of Hanover had been called from the government of a poor province in Germany, to take possession of the triple crown of England. It was not for his religion, because no one ever heard of his having any; it was not for his wisdom, for that was equally deficient; it was not for any personal gifts, because he was as repulsive in aspect, as he was undignified in his carriage. No, it was because he inherited from his mother a claim on the British throne, as the nearest descendant of the Stuarts, professing the Reformed Religion.

The Elector of Hanover was arbitrary, bigotted, avaricious, and profligate. To his English subjects, there seemed to be some mystery connected with his matrimonial existence, that intimated his consort had been got rid of in some peculiar unwarrantable manner; the story was one that seemed to belong to the darker ages, when lordly oppressors flourished in greater vigour than has been known of late years. The Elector of Hanover was also stupid, obstinate, passionate, and vulgar.

There was evidently some mistake in making him a king, for he had neither kingly tastes, nor kingly feelings; he neither looked like a king, behaved

exhibition of vulgarity, roguery, ugliness, and meanness ; it was not only upon the ordinary appendages to royal a caricature apparently expressly designed to cast such an institution into contempt. In the King and the principal ministers sure resembled Dutch representations of St. Anthony, whose temptations possess features that are an antidote to any thing in the shape of passion, and the saint seems as susceptible of any such emotions as the well painted foreground, which is the only crowded canvass, the spectator is satisfied with.

George I. seemed out of place in St. James'. He appeared in his own realize to the spectators, two persons to all who were acquainted with

his Court, they belong to our story, and we must do the best we can with them.

We, therefore, without further introduction, place the reader within the palace of St. James' in a lofty apartment hung round with pictures, mostly portraits of the Stuart family, from such able painters as Vandyke, Sir Peter Lely, and Sir Godfrey Kneller. The furniture of the room was extremely rich in crimson velvet, embroidered in the most splendid manner; nevertheless, a slovenly air seemed to pervade every thing, from the ill hung curtains at the windows, to the misplaced chairs against the wall.

There was a profusion of ornaments of every description on the richly gilt tables; many matchless enamels, some exceedingly rare vases, china ornaments of the most delicate beauty, costly gems, and the choicest specimens of goldsmith's work; but every thing seemed in confusion, out of place, and jumbled together without taste or order, as if the possessors were ignorant both of their character and value.

A large Chinese screen stood at one part of the apartment, as though defending from the cold air or the glances of the inquisitive, a particular easy chair, bearing the royal arms of England worked

man plainly dressed, and still more tured. He wore the usual heavy merable curls; but it failed to confer countenance, particular only for its finement. Beetling brows, shaded a general expression as dull as those of the lower part of the face was vulgar and marked with wrinkles at the corners, heavy mouth, indicative of distrust and apprehension.

The ordinary look was grave even to changing frequently to suspicion; but a careful observer might have noticed features a wild, uneasy expression, that mind disturbed by some secret disquiet. The whole face was without a single gleam of life; it gave evidence neither of heart nor of intellect, seemed to belong to some member of a barbarous kingdom, as ignorant of human knowledge as the brute.

given at the expense of symmetry, and broad shoulders, large extremities, short body, a protruding stomach, and thick legs, seemed rivalling each other which should contribute the greatest share of vulgarity to the general effect.

At a glance it was easy enough to perceive that the individual seated so clumsily in that splendid *fauteuil*, within one of the most magnificent apartments in the palace of St. James', was every inch *not* a king. Nevertheless, he boasted of being monarch of three kingdoms ; and, much more dear to him, was sovereign of a considerable German territory. Yes, for although the snuff-coloured suit did not indicate any very high degree of rank, the broad ribbon across his chest, the star at his breast, and the band below his right knee, pointed him out as George I., by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland and Ireland, and Elector of Hanover.

King George sat with his legs crossed under his chair, his head bent forward, and his dull eyes staring vacantly at the fire—for though the summer had scarcely departed, a blazing fire was in the grate. There were many papers on the table, but all in confusion, notwithstanding they were

thoughts were elsewhere—he was kingly duties—he had completely lost his new kingdom. The royal mind had been back to scenes that had been unconsciously dignities. Memory had carried him to a sunny spot in the gloomy wilderness of that spot so rich in bloom, so grand and pure.

The angelic face, whose smiles gave sunshine, again opened her bowered interior in his threshold; the young creature with the visions he had gained by means so unwelcome to his home that perfect Eden, which existed by a woman's devotion. But that Paradise was now its serpent, and as the crafty features of its and bitterest enemy obtruded upon his senses, the royal visionary had sufficient good in his dull and sluggish nature to be disturbed; and as if to divert his thought there was a tremendous heat from the

This action roused him out of his reminiscences of the brief felicity he had been allowed to enjoy in the well remembered Herenhausen palace of his beloved Hanover; and he changed his position, glanced uneasily at the contents of the table, looked at his watch, and then rang a silver hand bell. The summons was immediately answered by the entrance from the ante-room of two individuals of swarthy features, large mustachios and beards, black as jet, eyes as full of cunning as of fierceness, dressed in magnificent turbans, and costly Turkish dresses.

Their sudden apparition might have caused a suspicion to enter the mind of the spectator, that he was in Constantinople instead of in London; for it seemed altogether out of nature that a Christian monarch should be waited upon by Infidels. Nevertheless, he was in the English metropolis, though these swarthy personages were genuine Mahometans.

Mustapha and Mahomet had been taken prisoners by the King many years back, when he held a command in the Imperial army, then engaged in a war against the Turks; since when they had been employed by their captor in various capacities, in which their freedom from Christian

employments, such as spy, informer, counsellor, and broker for the sale of appointments, which they had discovered to be equally profitable.

Indeed there was very good reason that Mahomet and Mustapha possessed influence with the King, that either had more power in his hands than all ministers put together; and with a reflected credit on their black beard not slow in perceiving the advantage that might be made to accrue from it

“Mustapha!” said the King in German, “what waits?”

“The English nobleman, Stanhope, your Majesty,” replied the Turk, in English language, after making a humble obeisance, “master in the Turkish fashion.

“Any one with him?”

“The English nobleman, Stanhope,”

The King uttered a German execration of considerable length and intensity.

“These men are always disturbing me. I cannot be troubled with their long speeches and longer faces, about the ominous state of the nation. Let them be told I cannot grant them an audience this morning.”

Mustapha, making another humble genuflection, withdrew, with his face turned towards his master, till he had backed himself out of the apartment. Mahomet remained quietly where he had at first placed himself; standing erect, with eyes fixed upon his sovereign, ready to gratify his slightest wish, from simple mendacity up to the most daring assassination. For some time, however, the King either did not observe him, or did not think it necessary to call his services into requisition.

His eyes were fixed on the fire, and he was again lost in deep reverie; but an unwelcome remembrance of the handsome and gallant Count, whom his vindictive enemies had pursued till they slaked their vengeance in his blood, once more disturbed the agreeable current of the royal ideas, and with a wild, threatening glance, the King moved himself uneasily in his chair.

replied the Turk, with the proper :
with as grave an aspect as ever be
sulman. "The Prince has rode in
gone to the play, has written letters
visits from his principal friends, he
confidential talk with his chamberlain
made love to three new English beauties
whom is the lady in waiting on
consort."

"Fool !" exclaimed the monarch
if fool he was, it was merely after
his parent, who had exactly in the
however completely he now contravened
it—neglected a fair and virtuous wife
with the first woman who would
addresses.

"Moreover, your Majesty has
the lips of the humblest of your subjects
nued the man, "that the Prince is

in his Royal Highness's features that seem to point to some action about to be done, from which the most perfect success is anticipated."

"Idiot!" cried the King, with increased bitterness. "He is ever intent upon running his worthless head into dangers from which he cannot withdraw it. He must be closely watched, and his principal associates dogged, to ascertain where they go to. See that it be done, Mahomet."

"The King's will is the law of his slave," answered the subservient infidel. "It has also been stated to me, from a trustworthy source, that the Prince has spoken disrespectfully of his Sovereign and parent, declaring him to be—"

"Say on!" thundered out the King, finding his swarthy attendant hesitate. "What new ribaldry has he dared to utter?"

"I tremble to repeat it to your sublime Majesty," said the Turk.

"Omit it at your peril!" shouted the King.

"'A pig-headed old fool,' Sire?" added the Mahometan, cautiously edging back from his royal master as he noticed his glaring eye, and livid face; "'with as little feeling as sense,' may it please you, my most worshipful Lord and Sovereign, 'and with just such ideas of governing as

respecting the Prince of Wales was invented by those whose interest it was to create the ill-feeling that existed between the father and son; of which inventions these fanatics were the ordinary channels of circulation. The Prince was not very susceptible of such expressions, and entertained most scrupulous notions of propriety; but whether such words had been uttered by him, they produced the effect expected from them.

The King burst out in one of those fits of rage, which of late years had been too frequent with him; his face became of a purple hue, and his mouth worked convulsively; his eyes gleamed with an unnatural light, and he clenched his heavy fists—the lace ornaments which adorned them could not take advantage of their clumsiness—he poured out a volley of abuse in the German language, in words so

an impetuous stream from the royal mouth, or give an adequate conception of the denunciations that rushed like an overwhelming avalanche from the same source. The King, however, had a stock of such flowers of rhetoric not to be matched by any of his royal brethren :—no, not even by that peculiarly abusive Sovereign, his son-in-law, the King of Prussia.

Mahomet watched his patron's passion with an unflinching gravity that shewed he had become somewhat familiarised with such explosions. He looked on as steady in his features, and as stiff in his drapery, as though he had been but a well modelled figure of wax.

“Let him be watched,” cried the monarch, fiercely. “Note all well who come and go. A thousand devils ! Had I but another son I would teach him better conduct. I would make him repent his insolence. I would—”

Here commenced another burst of unpronounceable, as well as of unreasonable hatred, which was evidently the tail of the storm, for the gloom in the King's saturnine countenance, seemed breaking off, and his savage glances became again dull and spiritless.

The wily Mussulman saw the change, and with

his invaluable experience was prepared to take immediate advantage of it. He had done his duty to those who paid him well, and now sought to avail himself of an opportunity to perform a still deeper duty he owed himself. The firm of Mustapha and Mahomet, ever since they had been established in England, had carried on a traffic, the profit arising from which their brethren in Asia could never have surmised. They had traded with a capital which must have put them to very little inconvenience in the management, large as it was, for it consisted of impudence, lies, and cunning. In their long experience of their royal master, they so thoroughly knew how to take advantage of his follies and weaknesses, that on their arrival in a country where all who sought his favour were strange to his person, they immediately commenced selling their services to whoever chose to apply to them ; and the singular extent of their agencies was only to be equalled by the contradictory nature of their several purposes.

It is quite impossible that any Christian should have possessed that happy indifference to objects which these Turks exhibited in their various transactions with the multitude of their clients. They

received bribes from foreign ambassadors to betray their King ;—they were equally well rewarded by the King to mislead the foreign ambassadors ; the King's mistresses feed them, to keep them acquainted with the transactions of the King's ministers ; the King's ministers feed them better to put them in possession of the intrigues of the royal mistresses ; they were paid spies employed by the father to watch the son ; they were no less well remunerated informers for the son against his parent. The leading parties in the interest of the Pretender had made it worth their while to keep them informed of the sayings and doings of him whom they obstinately continued to call the Elector of Hanover ; and the great promoters of Protestant ascendancy saw equal reason to hold them in their pay in expectation of early information from the friends of "the Chevalier."

No philosophers ever learned such practical philosophy as was displayed by these well known personages ; they so well combined the inapproachable art of doing everything, with that equally valuable one of doing everybody. Then the rogues looked so respectable in their beards ; so dignified in their turbans ; so honourable in every article of their infidel costume.

such great trowsers must indicate very
—their confidence in such imposin
might have been lessened had they kn
his own country the highest dignity
nosed Mustapha had ever attained, v
attendant on a public bath; whilst t
looking Mahomet, before, in compan
associate, he had quitted the City of
to war against the Franks, had been sa
the humble emoluments of a Turkish b

Mahomet waited with his custom
reverence, till the last ebullition of t
passion had subsided. He did not s
had become too great an adept in the e
palaces to venture to say a word witho
been addressed; but he made a move
attracted the King's attention from t
reverie into which he had

familiar to him in early life. "An honest and loyal subject seeks to be your Majesty's purveyor of wines."

"Let him possess the office," said the King, without giving the applicant a thought.

"The King's goodness is inexhaustible," exclaimed the Turk, with his customary salutation ; "it is a well that hath never failed. May the generosity of my Lord the King long continue to be the refuge of the deserving ; and emboldened by such condescension, if the King's slave might presume to recommend a worthy, estimable, and industrious artizan, who aspires to be tailor to the royal household ?"

"Let the man have what he wants," answered the King in the same careless manner. This fresh concession gave rise to a few more flourishes, and a few more recommendations ; all of which were agreed to without the slightest demur :—the King never troubling himself in any instance to ask so much as a single question as to the competency and respectability of the parties for whom his Page of the Back Stairs was applying.

George I. did not like trouble ; and then the King was well aware that he was not in a position to know whether such persons were or were

The dark eyes of the sinister lookin
acquired additional brightness with ev
he achieved ; and when his list of clien
gone through without the slightest v
the result, their brilliancy became ext
But his business with the King of E
much more comprehensive. Favourin
of roguish tradespeople was a trifling
had nobler constituents, and he was n
to neglect their interest, when there c
a doubt he was also advancing his c
amazing extent.

Mahomet was a profound master .
He had served a long apprenticeship t
lation, and had all the resources of ba
at his fingers' ends. He never failed to
best use of any opportunity he coul

importance, until all these delicate matters having been disposed of, he felt upon him the strong conviction that he had done his duty; and the very pleasant assurance in so doing of having earned an extremely handsome sum in ready money.

The King, during this colloquy had once or twice changed his position;—had even looked at his watch, and had rose from his chair to stir the fire; but he seemed to think better of it, for he returned to his seat, as if he preferred amusing himself by paring his finger nails with a pen-knife, which occupied him for the remainder of the time the conscientious Mussulman was advancing the interests of his employers; all which period his Majesty contented himself with putting a few questions when something in any way aroused his attention, or expressing himself either commendatory or mandatory, on the points brought in review before him. The Monarch then put an end to the interview, by commanding his Page of the Back Stairs to send Mustapha to him. Mahomet received the command with an air of the most profound respect, and with a dignity that would mightily have astonished his

less alone than in his solitude.
his luxurious chair, and fixed his
fire ; but they saw nothing of the
flame that met their gaze : they be-
face of a beautiful and sorrowing
was pining in hopeless wretched
prisoner in a remote castle in Germa-

There surely is an omnipotence
which defeats the objects of the
tyrannical. At least so felt the p
as notwithstanding her strict and se-
and the legions of spies and gun-
rounded her night and day, to pre-
story becoming known, he could not
he felt her influence even in the s
own cabinet.

He was lost in a reverie, staring
coals among which he fancied he
tearful eyes and pallid features of

previously to dismiss his ministers. Poor men ! surely they had fallen on evil times when, while seeking the Sovereign on affairs of pressing emergency, they were denied an audience, and summarily sent about their business, till the King was at leisure, by a rascal who neither of them could have seen in his house, without entertaining reasonable apprehensions for the safety of the plate-chest. But they had served their apprenticeship to their new King, and therefore with a praiseworthy patience, on hearing the unceremonious intimation of the royal will, quietly took their departures, leaving word they would repeat their visit in a couple of hours, as they had pressing business with his Majesty.

“Who waits ?” was again the query of King George ; for the entrance of either of his Turkish attendants uncalled, always denoted some one applying for an audience. The fierce-looking Page of the Back Stairs made his salutation.

“Illustrious Lord !” exclaimed he, “I am desired to state that the Herr von Sauercraut, the master of the royal kitchen, craves an audience on affairs of great importance connected with his office.”

“The Herr Sauercraut ! What on earth can he

ear," replied the Mahometan gravely.

"Let him enter."

No sooner was the command given, than the highly respectable Mr. Mustapha bowed and retired to the door, and in the lapse of a few minutes entered with a very short square bearded man with more corpulence than was usual, who prevented his seeing any part of his face. He possessed a good tempered jolly face, his eyes and nose were very much sunken, his bullet head, set off by a short wig, was dressed in the court fashion, very richly embroidered, with ruffles and sword; and the master of the kitchen was able to take rank in the Mall with the best gentleman in the country.

The Herr von Sauercraut advanced to the King's cabinet making a succession of bows that proved at least his possessing more of back than strangers would have had.

"Good day, Herr Sauercraut," exclaimed the King to his master cook, who was an established favourite.

"*Von* please your Majesty," replied the little man with great emphasis. "Herr *von* Sauercraut."

The King, though a man of solemn turn of mind, could not refrain from smiling at the importance which his old domestic attached to the aristocratic prefix to his name.

"Well, Herr *von* Sauercraut," said his Majesty with emphasis as marked as his own, "what was your reason for requesting an audience?"

"Please your Majesty I wish to resign," answered the master of the kitchen with the air of a martyr at the stake.

"Resign, man!" cried the King in genuine astonishment—for the idea of one of his countrymen giving up the very profitable occupations his succession to the throne of England enabled him to bestow upon them, appeared incredible.

"Yes, please your Majesty, I wish to resign."

"Fellow, have you lost your wits? Have you grown so fat you can see no more of your own interest than you can of your shoe-buckles? I

could not have believed there was such a blockhead in all Germany !”

“ Please your Majesty, I am well aware of the extraordinary sacrifice I am about to make ; and be assured that as a true Hanoverian it could only be with extreme reluctance that I am about to give up a good place in this rich kingdom, where there is such plenty to be got, with such exceedingly little trouble in getting it. But to entertain scruples of conscience, please your Majesty.”

“ Scruples of conscience, sirrah ! Scruples of conscience because you are enabled to make a rapid fortune with little trouble ? Why the man’s raving.”

“ The fact is, please your Majesty, that the dishonesty in the royal kitchen has risen to such a height that it can no longer be tolerated where there is any due regard for decency. In our beloved Hanover, that there was some picking and stealing I will not deny ; but then it was done with something like moderation. But in England my fellow servants, who in their own country were satisfied with robbery in a modest and respectable way, plunder in a manner that makes

one's hair stand on end. From morning till night, please your Majesty, the royal kitchen seems turned into a den of thieves, each vying with the other in stealing the stores.

“I am too true an Hanoverian to be foolishly repugnant to any reasonable acquisitions that bounteous Heaven puts in one's way in other countries; but the wholesale plunder which has for some time been going on around me astounds me, and I fear this rich country under such a system, must soon become as impoverished as our beloved Hanover.

“I think it my duty, please your Majesty, to make known this awful state of things, and request your Majesty's gracious permission to retire to your Electorate to spend the little competence which under Divine Providence, by industriously availing myself of opportunities for adding to my gains at the expense of your Majesty's excellent English subjects, I have been enabled to obtain.”

The King listened to this complaint with an air half puzzled, half amused. That peculation was going on to an immense extent in the palace, his ministers had long made him aware; but why this should be made known to him by one of the

depredators, he could not understand. There was no precedent of a Hanoverian ever before having been dissatisfied with the plundering propensities of his compatriots,

George I. certainly felt some difficulty in disposing of so unusual a case; but at last he seemed to understand the true nature of the application, and the natural stolidity of his countenance gave way before the idea that entered his mind of its extreme absurdity.

“I am much moved, Herr von Sauercraut,” replied the King, as gravely as he could, “at the very uncomfortable position in which you seem to be placed; but let your consolation exist in the knowledge, that this fine country of England will bear an extraordinary amount of pillage—more indeed than would destroy a dozen Hanovers, inclusive of the provinces of Bremen and Verden. Herr von Sauercraut, I recommend you to add to the fortune a generous Providence has allowed you to accumulate, at the expense of these wealthy people, by staying where you are. If you find your fellow servants engaged in the work of plunder, steal too; and,” he added in a significant manner, “Herr von Sauercraut, be sure you steal enough.”

The face of the master of the kitchen brightened up amazingly at this gracious speech ; and with a smile of intelligence, and a profusion of bows, he lost no time in backing himself out of the royal presence, a happier man by a great deal than when he entered it.

Scarcely had this highly respectable personage taken his departure, when the vigilant Mustapha returned, and after his customary genuflexions, announced that the principal ministers of state craved an audience on affairs of the greatest importance. The impatience of the sovereign, at this announcement was very striking ; the gleam of good humour that had lighted up his heavy countenance at the close of the interview with his master of the kitchen, faded entirely, and his face resumed its wonted sullenness. At this moment, the Turk murmured some observation respecting the probability of the ministers having something of importance to lay before the King relating to Hanover. No sooner was the hint given, than it was acted upon. With a more serene aspect, the German King gave permission for his English ministers to enter the apartment ; and presently as their names were announced,

there entered Lord Stanhope, Lord Townshend, Sir Robert Walpole and Mr. Secretary Craggs.

The ministers approached their sovereign with the air of delinquent school boys going up to their pedagogue to receive the reward of some such heinous transgression as robbing an orchard ; they filed up solemnly in their full wigs and handsome court suits, making due obeisances as they approached. The King kept his seat, and recognizing them as they presented themselves, held out his hand to each in turn, who respectfully kneeling, raised it to his lips.

As the early portion of the conversation which ensued was of a very political character, we do not think it sufficiently interesting to report it. We need only state that the subject under discussion was Hanover, whose interests were to be regarded at any and every sacrifice to those of England. Much was said about the different states that composed the Electorate ; of Zelle and Calenberg, of Lüneburg and Lauenburg, and a good deal of expected additions to it, such as Bremen and Verden ; and various plans were considered for their protection, improvement, and prosperity.

Once or twice, one or other of the Ministers

attempted to turn the conversation to subjects, in which the interests and happiness of England were involved ; but it was soon found to be a hopeless affair. Hanover was the only theme : the most important questions of foreign policy were treated with perfect indifference, when the Electorate was not to be considered in them ; and what related to government at home was regarded as quite unworthy of consideration, simply because Hanover had nothing to do with it.

Sir Robert Walpole gave an intelligent look to his colleagues, and then boldly sought to create a diversion. It appeared that the real object of the desired audience was very different from the ostensible one. The ministers of the crown had become so deeply impressed with a sense of the wide-spreading mischief caused by the dishonesty of the King's German favourites, male and female, that they had determined on making a representation of the evil, and a proper remonstrance against its continuance.

It was amusing to observe the diplomacy of the ministers in bringing the subject before their august master. How cautiously they avoided giving him offence, by any expression or allusion, such as the case really required ; how tenderly they

... .. 1856, at
women had their deserts, they would
forced to change their fine apart-
palace, for bare standing room in the
with what extreme considerateness
tioned the wholesale and impudent
plunder which the German attend
King, from the chief favourite, Coun-
to the very humblest scrub in the
commenced almost as soon as they at
country.

But their diplomacy availed them
Elector of Hanover, in becoming King
land, had not entered into a contract
Hanoverian subjects abstain from following
natural inclinations ; and those who had
to accompany him to his new territories
bound to protect in the indulgence of

ceeding, caused his harsh countenance to assume an aspect more and more severe. What was the use of being King, he thought, if he could not reward his faithful followers; and it was a gross offence in any person to interfere with the industrious efforts of his enterprising countrymen to make their fortunes.

The King very sharply took his ministers to task for presuming to remonstrate with him, on a state of things so necessary to the welfare of his faithful Hanoverians. He did not deny their dishonesty; but it was evident that in the royal mind honesty was a thing of which he had no definite conception. He perhaps had had no experience of it in his Electorate, for he seemed to doubt it had any existence in his kingdom. He even went so far as to assume that Sir Robert Walpole and of course his colleagues, sold their influence at Court in the same business-like manner for which his German mistresses and attendants were so remarkable.

It was in vain for the ministers to have disclaimed such a proceeding. Sir Robert did attempt to say something respecting the necessity of integrity to public men, which Lord Stanhope thought proper to echo, and which Lord Townshend varied.

and alluded to the growing popular Pretender, and the rapidly increasing Parliament and elsewhere, arising from the public treasure, and the traffic in trust and emolument, by foreigners.

These observations only served to royal displeasure ; the King was consequently exceedingly ill used, and under that he very quickly got into a passion and out a torrent of long German words complimentary to his audience ; but of them could understand what his and as he did not choose to hear, expressions passed unheeded.

King George ended the interview with his ministers, and though each could shew the usual mark of respect, before

Sir Robert and his colleagues had departed, and the King was left to the enjoyment of his own reflections, which invariably afforded as much gratification to his solitude as the night's solitary reflections to a criminal about to be hanged in the morning. The same pale accusing face presented itself, the same sense of insecurity filled his soul, the same conviction of his own folly as well as criminality took possession of his thoughts; till unable to bear these torturing reminiscences and impressions, he suddenly started up from his chair with a mighty effort, called loudly for his attendants, and on their entrance announced his intention to visit the apartments of Mademoiselle Schulenburg.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEIR IN AMB

Pretty : in order to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs,
The things we know are neither rich :
But wonder how the devil they got th

WE must now beg the reader
from the King of England's c
dressing-room of the heir appar
situated in a different part of the
the windows overlooking the gar
park. A very handsome chamber,
nices and mouldings, superb hang

described in the last chapter. It was encumbered with all sorts of incongruous things—hunting-whips, fowling-pieces, swords, pistols, fishing-rods, walking-sticks, mirrors, pipes, snuff-boxes, books, fiddles, flutes, pomade jars, and bottles of strong waters, seemed mixed up with various articles of dress; stockings, shoes, boots, breeches, coats, hats, in almost endless number and variety placed on chairs, tables, cabinets, and in fact wherever room could be found for them.

At a small gilt table near one of the windows there sat a young man rather short of stature, and somewhat pinched in features. The expression of his countenance would have been repulsive, had not a sense of good humour, mixed with animal enjoyment visible in the lower part of his face, redeemed in a slight degree the narrow forehead and unintelligent eyes that made his ordinary look so very ordinary. There certainly was no one feature that could be styled handsome. But though plain, there was a deal of good nature in the countenance, that gave it a great advantage over the dull and harsh physiognomy of his father. For be it known that the portrait we have been attempting to sketch is that of the Prince of Wales.

His Royal Highness was wrapped in a silk dressing gown, and wore a night cap of the same material, the only finery he seemed disposed to wear—for he usually affected a citizen like plainness in his dress; writing materials were before him, near which were a silver candlestick and extinguisher, and an empty Sevres cup and saucer of the most beautiful pattern, which evidently had not long since contained chocolate.

He sat or rather reclined back in a cumbrous arm chair, looking steadfastly but laughing unconstrainedly at a person standing before him, in a sky blue velvet suit laced with gold, who notwithstanding he now bore the appearance of a man of fashion, might with very little difficulty have been recognised as the *ci-devant* genteel footman of Brigadier General Lepel, whom we beg to re-introduce to our readers with his proper name and office, as the Honourable Philip Dormer, one of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and believed to be very much in his confidence.

Now it deserves to be known that the Prince, though a much more amiable character than his father, was scarcely less obstinate or less opinionative. He had sufficient sagacity to see that the

King was despised by his people, and his filial love was far from being sufficiently strong to prevent his endeavouring to take advantage of it. He had suffered too much and too often from his father's tyrannical temper, to feel either respect or affection for his person ; there was another and deeper cause for his dislike of his progenitor, of which the reader will be fully informed in the course of this narrative.

There was not much feeling in the Prince ; but there was some, and the wonder is that after the pains that had been taken to fill his mind with the most hateful errors and prejudices, he should possess any.

The shallow intellect and the still shallower heart of his father had been cunningly filled with all sorts of suspicions and apprehensions. He was made to doubt even that his son was indebted to him for his existence, of which a certain handsome Count had the reputation. This was one great source of his hatred to his heir—a hatred which was industriously fanned by malicious gossips, and industrious mischief-makers, who earnestly strove to make the mutual ill-feeling of father and son, conducive to their own interests.

The Prince had sufficient wisdom to see that some deference to public opinion was necessary in the reigning family ; and although he was very far from being likely to make this deference in his own case as perfect as it ought to be, he was desirous of establishing in his own personal attendants, a state of things as opposite as possible to the repulsive appearance and contemptible conduct of those of the King.

One of the worst features in the Prince's disposition was the little attention he cared to bestow upon the seventh commandment ; but unfortunately this was a vice so common among the Princes and nobles of Europe, that under the name of gallantry it was looked upon as an accomplishment worthy of being classed amongst the fine arts. Even in this, something redeeming might be found : he was too clumsy a seducer to be very dangerous, and too good natured to allow of any of those infamous schemes for the destruction of virtue, which were so common at the period.

He was listening, evidently greatly amused, at the narrative of his handsome and well-dressed Gentleman of the Bedchamber, who was making the Prince acquainted with his adventures at Petersham Manor.

“ And so this Lepel is bootiful. Eh, Dormer ?” said the heir apparent in imperfect English,—in using which, by the way he contrasted favourably with his father, who would not take the trouble to learn a word of the language of the people he had been called upon to govern.”

“ Stab my vitals, your Royal Highness,” exclaimed Dormer in a seeming ecstasy, “ I have seen nothing so young and fresh, and so extremely lovely in all my travels;—may I perish if her very look is not poetry.”

“ Boetry ! I like boetry mineself, vid blenty of bassion and bathos, and all de oder tings you read in der poetry of Mr. Bope.”

“ Ah, Mr. Pope never wrote anything so beautiful in his life as a smile from Mary Lepel. I vow it is beyond poetry or painting either.”

“ Beyond bainting ! but I will shudge for mineself ; I will see Madam Lepel vid mine own eyes. Is she more bootiful as Mrs. Howard ?”

“ There is no comparison, your Royal Highness, strike me dumb !”

“ No gombarison you zay ! Dat is all vat you call vudge. Der Howard is der most agribble vomans as I see in England. Has she such goot gomplexions as der Howard ? — has she such

not an exquisite, an incomparable
of lilies and roses. Her features are
youth and innocence; and her proportions
such as can only be rivalled by the work
of Grecian art. Stab my vitals!"

"Den she must be a Veenix!"

"She is a Phoenix undoubtedly,
Highness."

"Vell I vill see her vid mine own
does she not abbear mosh too you
tink you, for to take her place v.
vemales as shall attend my wife?"

"I cannot but consider such a position
suited to her. Positively the very thing

"I was tinkering how wonderful her
abbear ven she come to Court to
preside dat bair of dam antiderluvian
der Schulerkammer . . .

Philip Dormer had suffered considerably from coming in contact with this young lady ; but he harboured no malice. He gave a faithful description of her personal attractions ; her extreme vivacity ; her lively conversation ; her graceful deportment ; and her numerous accomplishments.

“Dis is von greater Veenix dan de oder,” observed the Prince at the conclusion. “Your desgription make my mout water. But I vill zee her vid mine own eyes. Dere most be vat you call vudge, in all dese vine vonderful tings you say of dese two young beobles.”

“If there is a word of fudge, your Royal Highness, may I perish !” replied his Gentleman of the Bedchamber, scarcely attempting to conceal a smile. “I doubt I do the young ladies justice. —’Pon my life, they are vastly handsome. I vow and protest, in the name of Venus and all the Graces, you might search throughout England and not find two more lovely creatures.”

“Inteed !” cried the Prince, with a look of much humour. “Do you pretend to zay, dat dey shall be more handsome den my fader’s bair of dam antiderluvian grockodiles, der Schulenburg, and der Kielmansegge !”

ready mirror.

“But you have not told me noting Howe, and Madam Meadows?” ob Prince. “Who knows, perhaps, der Veenixes!”

“Your Royal Highness shall deteplied his companion. “I made my vworth, where General Howe resides, ing my opportunity, got into the he disguise of a poor soldier wounded borough’s wars. The young lady he in the kitchen, and sent for me; and and mother being gone to town, as knew, she took upon herself the duties of the house. She was careful I s plenty to eat and to drink, and encour relate my history. And a pretty his of it. Stab my vitals! if I did not p

bootivul as some beobles have said?" inquired the heir apparent.

"I will describe her; and I can do so with some minuteness, as I regarded her with particular attention," said his informant.

"Vat an apominable zly rogue! Dere vas not no need vor you to be so bartiklar. But tell me, how bootivul she vas."

"I found Sophy Howe possessed of a commanding figure, with finely shaped shoulders and bust, and monstrous pretty hands and feet. May I perish, if in shape she looked not a perfect Juno; but her face was that of a Venus, and a most seducing Venus too! Stab my vitals! I never saw such full dark eyes, or so rich a complexion; and the mouth was so ripe, so rosy, and so voluptuous."

"Mein Got, vas dere ever such bainter of a bretty voman's bortrait! I shall be in love vid her bevore I see her. I shall lose mine avections to dis sharming desgription. I shall be ravish vid de mere talk of her ribe rosy mout. But is dis exquisit young greeture von dat shall veel de bowerful bassion of love in her bretty liddle heart?"

"I vow her beauty is of that character which

meeting him, as people say, were as under vire."

The Prince laughed at his own jest, attendant, though disclaiming being of Madam Howe, joined cheerfully in good-humour.

"Is she more bretty as de Montagu vat I call most agribble—most shavascinating' of all der bretty vomans my vife."

"Lady Wortley Montagu positive many and great attractions; but I prize the beauty of Sophy Howe is far more attractive."

"Go on vid your story, mine vrien"

"I took my departure as soon as completed my observations; and carried good wishes, and some sterling evi-

hope you will be more fortunate.' 'Egad I considered Tobias Bastion to have been sufficiently fortunate in having escaped the lynx eye of the General; but I merely made my acknowledgments, and went my way.'

"Berhaps you vos not mosh to plame. But vat did you do ven you vent to de oder young vomans?"

"I had great difficulty in getting admission to Madam Meadows. She was living with an old maiden aunt at Twickenham, and their notions were so mighty rigid, that the appearance of a man in their cottage would have caused not less commotion than an earthquake. But when I have a duty to perform to my Prince, if I pay any heed to minor obstacles, strike me dumb!"

"Dere is noting so goot, and so brober, as your devotion. I am mosh beholden to you. But broceed."

"At last, by monstrous good fortune, I ascertained that a French master was required by the old lady to finish her niece's education; and getting the necessary recommendations, I presented myself as Monsieur Le Grand. I suppose I represented the Frenchman admirably, for after a formal examination touching my

engaged to improve madam me
French language."

"Vat a Brotean berson! Mi
would as readily turn Jew, or babist
himself, if tings looked likely enoug

"Your Royal Highness does me
nour, stab my vitals!" replied the Ge
Bedchamber, with a courtly bow. '
introduced to my pupil, whom I for
starched and formal for so young a
beautiful little angel in face and figu
with fine eyes and light hair. Per
seductive of the four; but undoul
gant and beautiful young woman, '
an ornament to your Royal Highne

"Oh, ah, yes—berhaps I must
young vomans to attend my vife.
helb put de old grocodiles out of ge

“ At the close of our very first lesson, I ventured to pay her a compliment, which she received with so frigid a look, a spectator might have fancied I had just put some gross affront upon her. The same day I received an intimation from the aunt, that her niece declined receiving any more French lessons; and, stab my vitals! if she did not reprove me, for the unwarrantable freedom I had taken.”

“ Dat is goot joke,” exclaimed the Prince laughing heartily, “ excellent goot joke, bositively. You vas sent apout your bizness vid von vlea in your ear, eh, mine goot vriend? You must have peen too barticular in your attentions, or I should zay in paying your gompliments to der young lady. But I must zee dem mine own zelf. I must zee if they be der beerless greatures you have said.”

“ A better opportunity cannot present itself than the one now available. By the visit to Mary Lepel of her three school-fellows, the four beauties, your Royal Highness has thought worthy to become attendants on the Princess, will then be under one roof, and you can either see them there, or meet them whenever they take their customary walks in the neighbourhood.”

“ Dat is drue, and I will take der virst obbor-

toonity to see dem broberly ; but now subbose you and I go to my vife's abartments. I must bay my respect, and all dat sort of ting."

The Prince of Wales summoned his valet-de-chambre ; and in a short time, with this person's assistance, a handsome wig was made to take the place of his Royal Highness's night cap, and a sober looking coat replaced his silk dressing gown, whilst his loose slippers gave way to shoes with gold buckles ; then with his sword at his side his hat on his head, and a cane in his hand, he went whistling out of the room.

CHAPTER VIII.**A PRINCESS RECEIVING MORNING VISITS.**

Formed to gain hearts that Brunswick's cause denied,
And charm a people to her father's side.

TICKELL.

CAROLINE Princess of Wales was apparently the most quiet and unobtrusive creature ever discovered within the precincts of a Palace. She had enjoyed the benefit of being educated at the Court of Prussia, under the superintendence of one of the most accomplished women of her age; and while she possessed a mind of a superior order, and attainments rarely met with in royal females, it is not extraordinary that she affected an inclination for the abstruser branches of knowledge, and indeed for many scientific pursuits, which were then rarely sought after, by individuals of her sex.

The times were not favourable for learned

women. Female influence had been exhibited on a grand and most imposing scale in the capitals of France and Saxony ; but it had not its source in intellectual superiority. The old Electoress Sophia, the mother of George I, was one of the very few royal females, who about the close of the seventeenth century, assumed the distinction of a "blue-socking." Her pretensions, however, were far from being as exalted as her rank ; and though she did not want the high opinion of several eminent scholars she patronised, it was only by contrast with the very unintellectual personages who constituted the Hanoverian Court, that she could be styled a learned lady.

There is reason for believing that it was from the Electoress, the Princess of Wales, whilst domiciled with her after her marriage, contracted her learned propensities ; for in her society she met several distinguished scholars, and continually heard conversation of the most edifyingly philosophic character ; and when she arrived in England with her husband, the company she was at first thrown into at St. James's, in which her dull father-in-law, his ill-educated mistresses, and his somewhat weak-minded son, were the principal personages, made her sigh for the more congenial

associates, she had been used to converse with under the auspices of the old Electoress.

The Princess of Wales discovering how uncomfortably she was placed, aspired to create a Court of her own. She sought to obtain her wishes with equal cleverness and tact. She tried to attach to herself and her husband whatever talent she could come in contact with ; no matter in what direction it displayed itself, and with this design in view she assumed an extraordinary capacity for all sorts of knowledge. Nothing seemed to come amiss to her ; the most abstruse points of philosophy, the most doubtful questions of divinity, the most difficult scholarship, arts, sciences, and manufactures, seemed to come to her as familiarly as though she had studied them all her life.

With these apparent predilections it is not surprising that the Princess Caroline should have been sought by all the rising divines, scholars, poets and men of scientific acquirements England contained ; and that to her judgment was submitted every discovery in astronomy, chemistry, or any other branch of study, as well as sermons, poems, critical essays, plays, and books of every description. Her tables were covered with new books, her rooms crowded with new aspirants for dis-

tion. She soon found that there would be less difficulty than she had anticipated, in having a Court of her own ; still a great deal was to be done, to prevent suspicion in her father's mistresses or distrust in her husband.

The Princess carried on her proceedings with singular caution and prudence. To the King she was always extremely submissive and respectful ; to her husband she conducted herself as though she never interfered with politics, and nothing was so far from her mind, as to do anything which did not appear to emanate from him. The very idea for which the Prince took such credit—that of her possessing female attendants, taken from distinguished English families, who should be as remarkable for their beauty and accomplishments, as the foreign women about the King were for their ignorance and ugliness—had been started by her, though with her usual policy, she allowed it to seem to have its origin in a suggestion of her husband's. With the same prudence, she permitted the Prince to pursue his plans, of which she had early intelligence, without apparently taking the slightest notice of them, while she privately took measures to secure her own.

She was well aware of her husband's gallantries,

but never allowed them to trouble her repose. She had been long enough in the family to know the dreadful penalty her mother-in-law had paid, for attempting to check the coarse licentiousness of one member of it; and though the Prince was less disgraceful in his conduct in this respect, than his father, she doubtless saw nothing in his character to make her desirous of risking her liberty, from over anxiety about his affections.

She was good looking. That is to say possessed a German physiognomy that was far from being disagreeable; and her figure was at least majestic if not graceful. Her manners at this period were peculiarly winning—a womanly sympathy for every thing worthy of it, continually shewing itself; and her conduct as a wife was irreproachable. She won all hearts by her good feeling, and what is scarcely credible, notwithstanding his numerous infidelities, so well conducted herself, that she never forfeited her husband's respect, or diminished his admiration.

Such was Caroline, Princess of Wales, on that very morning with which we opened our chapter. She was engaged, in accordance with a Parisian fashion then coming into vogue amongst the dames of distinction in this country, in receiving

her morning visitors in bed. Her toilet had recently been made most carefully, her head being exquisitely elaborate, and such part of night dress as was visible, a sort of robe of lin of the most delicate texture, seemed admirably adapted to display her well developed bust to advantage.

The bedstead was placed in an alcove, with costly draperies of rose-coloured silk, embroidered, and very elegantly arranged ; a magnificent white satin quilt, with the royal arms and other devices worked in gold, covered the top of the Princess, and the bed furniture, except the delicate satin pillows, and some portion of a dazzlingly white cambric sheet trimmed with rich lace.

A silver rail that ran along the alcove, guarded the royal lady from too close approach from numerous visitors who pressed forward on an occasion, to pay their respects and to share the lively gossip with which they were expected to entertain the recumbant occupant of the state bed. Close to this barrier, leaning forward with an air of courtly respect, were several ladies and gentlemen, clad in the richest suits allowable for morning visits to a Princess.

It was a handsome and capacious apartment, redolent of the most delicate perfumes. Pictures of figures in a semi-nude state, from the seductive pencils of Rubens, Titian and Annibale Caracci, adorned the walls. A magnificent Turkey carpet was spread over the floor, and heavy but gorgeous draperies of velvet and gold, curtained the windows. Some beautiful marble busts of children, and small figures from the antique, stood on gilt brackets, whilst larger groups were to be seen on pillars placed in convenient corners.

The furniture was exceedingly rich ; the chairs, tables, cabinets, and mirrors of the costliest character of Louis XIV. The whole aspect of this apartment shewed how completely the magnificence of the French Sardanapalus had become naturalised in an English palace, where too, let it be remembered, the sovereign possessed about as much taste as his night cap ; but it must not be forgotten also, that its fair occupant did possess taste, and in her own quiet way was careful to have it properly established.

The Princess Caroline received company according to this French fashion, but received only select friends of both sexes, to whom she desired to shew particular honour, or whose society was

particularly agreeable to her. The persons present on this occasion consisted of several individuals of whom some were in attendance on her Royal Highness, and the rest were casual visitors. Of the first the most conspicuous was a young and pretty woman, who stood close to the head of the bed, and to whom the Princess frequently referred by styling her "My good Howard."

This was Mrs. Howard, a married lady, filling the office of Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess, and according to general report was one of those fair Englishwomen who had the reputation of receiving the attentions of the Prince. The *liaison* was as well known to the wife, as to the husband; but the former never allowed it to interfere with her appreciation of her too enticing attendant; the Princess did, however, it must be confessed, sometimes make her Lady of the Bedchamber feel her insignificance, notwithstanding the Prince's partiality; but she did it in a manner, which none perceived.

On all occasions she seemed to regard her with more than usual affection, and, as the person most interested in the affair, treated her with much consideration, it is not to be expected that the lookers on should be more squeamish. Indeed it

was anything but the fault of the age to regard this sort of criminality too severely ; in too many instances vice in high places in a much more offensive form was permitted to pass without the deduction of a tittle of the respect paid to the station it disgraced.

Mrs. Howard was apparently of a very cheerful temper, with lively hazel eyes, and a remarkably seductive mouth. Her form was well developed, perhaps a little too full to be strictly beautiful, but it belonged to the type of womanly beauty with which Rubens seemed so thoroughly enamoured, and no doubt was very likely to entice a man like the Prince of Wales, whose tastes were not more delicate than his principles. Mrs. Howard's behaviour to her royal mistress was marked by a singular degree of devotion, as though by the most strict attention to her wishes, in other matters of duty, she desired to make amends for a departure from it in one important point.

The elderly gentleman in the claret coloured coat and a rare diamond ring on his finger, was the Duke of Devonshire—a courtier whose intimate acquaintance with the English Court had been of infinite service to the Princess of Wales. He was a great gossip, and what is more sometimes

an exceedingly agreeable one, full of pleasant anecdotes of interesting personages from the Court of Charles II. down to that of Queen Anne, and abounding in those conversational resources so pleasant to the sex that can make entertainment out of the most trifling materials, and furnish forth a delightful repast of scandal, ridicule, or inuendo, according to the humour of the listener.

Near him was another nobleman, his junior by some dozen years; but though possessed of less experience, he was not less a courtier than his neighbour. This was Lord Bellenden, the father of the young friend of Mary Lepel. Though in the prime of life, it was evident he had lived too fast for his constitution; it was equally true he had lived too fast for his fortune. The crows' feet about the eye, the sunken cheek, the puckered mouth, and the colourless visage, contrasted unfavourably with the clearer and better preserved physiognomy of the wealthier peer. Lord Bellenden had been extremely dissipated in his youth, and had made no improvement in his manhood. His frequent visits to the gaming-table had early impoverished him; nevertheless he had for a long time contrived to maintain himself in what in those loose times was considered a

respectable position, almost entirely by his superior skill in those fashionable games quadrille, whist, ombre, pharaoh, brag, and hazard.

Lady Bellenden had been dead some time, and as his daughter had just completed her education, his Lordship on her return to England thought something might be done with her more advantageous to his fortunes than either luck or skill at the cards. He knew the peculiar aspect of affairs at St. James's, and as far as the King was concerned, he was well aware there was but an indifferent prospect for her in that direction. Had she been as ill-looking as she was handsome, and as dismal as she was lively, he might have entertained hopes of her being properly distinguished there. Nevertheless if ugliness reigned paramount with the sovereign, he was sufficiently well informed to know, that under the auspices of the heir apparent such attractions as Miss Bellenden possessed would have full sway.

To the Prince of Wales he was well known. He now became constant in his attentions to the Princess, and had contrived, by taking unusual pains, to make that lady much pleased with his society. He had even ventured to speak of his daughter, and of her extreme desire to be pre-

sented ; and had hinted that should Mary Bellen-den enjoy the good fortune of making a favourable impression on her Royal Highness, nothing could afford him greater gratification than that his daughter should have the honour of serving the Princess, in any honourable capacity for which she might be thought fitted.

To these complimentary speeches, the Princess of Wales made equally complimentary answers, encouraging his secret wishes in the most gracious manner, and making the most friendly inquiries after the fair candidate for her service. Lord Bellenden had not the least idea that the Princess long before he ventured to mention the subject was as well acquainted with his daughter's attractions and accomplishments as he was himself, and possessed a far more accurate knowledge of her disposition ; nor could he have surmised that the favourable way in which she listened to him arose from the satisfactory report she had received of the young lady from her constant adviser in all such matters, his frequent companion at the bed-side of the Princess, the gossiping Duke of Devonshire.

The third person in the group possessed of very dark complexion, with a somewhat reckless

expression, yet a handsome and commanding figure, well set off by his velvet coat and breeches, was Evelyn Pierrepont, Marquis of Dorchester. He was not an exclusive favourer of the heir, though found among the select few who were morning visitors to his consort; for he quite as frequently was seen at the unselect evening parties of the King.

It was the desire of the Marquis to be in favour with both, and his morning and evening visits he continued with equal punctuality and enjoyment; not without hopes that such well balanced respect would ultimately be of essential service to him. His zeal in favour of the House of Hanover was so far acknowledged, that he had a promise from the King to be raised to the ducal dignity, and the Hon. Wortley Montagu, who had lately married his daughter, the celebrated Lady Mary, was created one of the Lords of the Treasury.

The Marquis was a gay man of pleasure, a member of different convivial clubs, a frequenter of the opera; and though he had arrived at a time of life when such follies are usually put aside, he still endeavoured to maintain a reputation for gallantry, by keeping half a dozen mistresses, and continuing a tender intimacy with

nearly a score of other ladies of his acquaintance whom he allowed it to appear, were anxious to be similarly at his devotion.

The daughter of such a man, who as early as at eight years of age, was nominated by him in a moment of drunken revelry, a member of the famous Kit-Cat Club, to the licentious members of which, she was immediately introduced, and who amid caresses, praises and hiccups drunk to her health in bumpers, and admitted her claim to be on the list of the club, could not be expected to be a model of feminine propriety. She had been married more than two years, yet the conduct of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, begun to be the theme of much scandalous madversion; and among her innumerable admirers—for she had long continued the toast of the town—the Prince of Wales was considered one of the most favoured.

Let scandal say what it would, it was evident that it produced no impression against her or upon her; for there Lady Mary stood, in the gayest of the many gay dresses for which she was celebrated, with her handsome yet rather bold face, dressed in bewitching smiles, joining in the conversation with more freedom than any person present, and giving

utterance to witty remarks, that amused the whole circle, and delighted the Princess.

Lady Mary was a beauty, and had been a beauty long enough to get somewhat tired of the homage she had enjoyed. She was weary of flattery, and satiated with adoration. Her charms had been said and sung till every form of compliment had become common-place, and she longed for another sphere where she might feel some excitement in being worshipped. She had been so dosed with admiration ever since her childhood, that she felt so much distaste for anything approaching it, as to be in the habit of acting with perfect indifference to opinion.

This was often put down as recklessness; and the eccentricities in which she chose to indulge were attributed to a character lost to all sense of delicacy. In this the world too frequently did her injustice. She was much too careless of what she said and did: she was in the position of an absolute sovereign, who considers himself above opinion, and conducts himself as under such an impression; but Lady Mary was not worse than the mass of married ladies at that period, and in many respects better than those who reflected the most severely on her conduct.

After saying many smart things she carelessly directed her attention to the ornaments with which the apartment was profusely decorated, leaving the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Bellenden and her father, to entertain the Princess according to their own fancy ; and after amusing herself with examining the china figures, and the wax fruit, and the family miniatures that were placed about the tables, she took up a recent volume of Mr. Pope's poems, and quietly seating herself in a well-cushioned chair, prepared to read with as much indifference to the place in which she was, as she would have felt had she been at home. Court etiquette could not have been more completely set at nought ; but Lady Mary was a privileged person, and the Princess did not think it necessary to notice her eccentricity.

Lord Bellenden presently took his leave. He had scarcely departed when Lord Peterborough was announced, and there entered another of the gay spirits so characteristic of that age, who by their actions and their manners made it appear they never intended to grow old. His Lordship had been a soldier and a statesman, and in both characters had greatly distinguished himself: but

he was no less celebrated as a wit than as a man of gallantry. And now that he had lived at least fifty-six years of almost constant action, his spirits were still as high even to wildness, as they had been in the meridian of his hot youth.

He came forward, a tall man, very thin in figure, with a dashing look, clad in a military dress, a black wig tied behind him, and jack boots, which contrasted curiously with the court dresses of the other male visitors of the Princess. The Earl of Peterborough received a most gracious reception. His disregard of foppishness, notwithstanding his character for gallantry, was as well known as Lady Wortley Montagu's neglect of the customary ordinances of propriety; and received the same toleration. Even the long thick stick with an ugly head carved at the top, with which he had entered her Royal Highness's apartment, only raised a laugh from the Princess; which of course was echoed by her visitors, who knew his Lordship too well to be otherwise than amused at his bringing with him, into a lady's bed-chamber, such a formidable companion.

The Earl then told a good joke about his wishing to testify his loyalty, and knowing no better way to show it, than by carrying with him

the likeness of the person the King most delighted to honour. This hit at Mademoiselle Schulenburg increased the mirth ten-fold; even the Marquis found it irresistible, despite of his anxiety to do nothing that should jeopardise his promised promotion.

Lord Peterborough then poured forth a quick succession of jests, that kept the Princess and her visitors continually laughing. One that seemed to amuse them most was his relation of a practical joke he had just played upon a poor dancing master, that shewed his love for this sort of mischief, and the recklessness with which he indulged in it.

Proceeding along in his chariot, the streets being very dirty from constant rain, his Lordship observed a long lank Frenchman in pearl-coloured silk stockings, most carefully and deliberately picking his way over the flags. The opportunity for fun could not be thrown away; so the Earl called on his coachman to stop, flung open the door of the chariot, and drawing his sword, leaped out and ran after the man. The dancing master seeing a gentleman approaching in so menacing a manner, was taken with a sudden panic that made him totally regardless of his beloved pearl-silk

stockings. He took to his heels through the mud, followed by his pursuer as hard as he could lay foot to the ground. In a very short time the delicate colour of the Frenchman's hose was concealed under a mass of splashes; when the Earl sheathed his sword, and returned to his chariot delighted with the perfect success of his experiment.

At the conclusion of this anecdote the Duke of Devonshire left the apartment; immediately after which were announced the Duchess of Marlborough and Brigadier General Lepel. The stately old Duchess liked very little venturing as a mere complimentary visitor into a building, where but a few years back she had been more powerful even than the sovereign; and she had as little relish to pay compliments to any member of a family who, according to her notion, had slighted the great Duke, her husband; but she wished to serve the Brigadier, and though some thought she would have preferred accompanying him into the presence of the Pretender, she had promised to use her interest with the daughter-in-law of the Elector of Hanover to forward an object her old admirer had so much at heart, as

obtaining for his daughter the honour one of the Princess's personal attendants.

The Brigadier had made himself particularly elegant on this interesting occasion. He wore a new suit of rich velvet cut in the last fashion; he looked so fresh and so gay, as with all the reputation of a gentleman of the Court of Queen Anne, he handed the Duchess towards the alcove, as if it were possible to find room on the wall for another portrait of the Brigadier; and one ought assuredly to represent him in his present satisfactory position, appearing at Court under the auspices of his venerated patroness.

As for the great Duchess, though in her heart she felt nothing but contempt for the family of Brunswick, and every step she took increased her disdain of every thing and every person about them, she marked her sense of the duties required from established etiquette which she had noticed since she had entered the Princess's apartments by the most rigid observance of the ceremony exacted from visitors to royalty; and their admission was left to her fiat.

To see the old lady dressed out in the head-dress and stiff drapery of a former re-

ing in so stately a manner along the apartment, stopping at certain places to make the most profound reverences, yet from the expression of her proud eye, entertaining feelings diametrically opposed to all such ceremonies, was to behold something worthy of remembrance. She looked neither to the right nor to the left; one comprehensive glance at her entrance which had taken in every thing—the unheard of indecorousness of the thoughtless reader, and the intolerable indelicacy of a bed-room reception—had sufficed to give to her mind a just conception of the whole scene. She

recognised the apartment as the favourite sitting-room of her royal mistress; and without bestowing any further notice of any thing or any person in it, she advanced with a rigidity of muscle an earthquake would not have disturbed, till she came before the Princess.

Her Royal Highness welcomed her stately visitor very cordially; but this was far from producing the effect intended by it; it was in the opinion of the old lady undignified, and she sat down the consort of the Prince of Wales as lamentably deficient in breeding. After having, with all the stiffness of ceremony, paid her compliments, and presented her friend—which she had

been permitted to do very much by herself, as Earl of Peterborough and the Marquis of Chester had withdrawn from the rail as she vanced, to allow of her approach—she commenced an address worthy of being a speech from throne, in which she mentioned the Brigadier's very proper desire to devote his only daughter to the service of her Royal Highness, and entered into a detailed catalogue of the young lady's qualifications for such a distinction.

The Princess listened more graciously to this intimation, than she had done to the one she had so recently heard from Lord Bellenden:—this may have resulted partly from the extremely favourable opinion she had heard of the young lady, and partly from a desire to propitiate so powerful a person as the Duchess of Marlborough. When the Duchess had ended, her Royal Highness expressed a profusion of thanks for the trouble she had taken in endeavouring to gratify a favourite purpose of hers; and turning to the delighted Brigadier, entered into an animated conversation with him respecting his daughter, whose tastes, thoughts, and feelings, she appeared exceedingly well informed; and concluded with a multitude of obliging expressions by intimat-

a wish that Madam Lepel should be presented to her as early as possible.

The Duchess barely allowed the Brigadier to express his acknowledgements for such extreme considerateness, when she prepared to take her departure. At this moment the Earl of Peterborough joined them, and addressed the Duchess as an old friend, heartily and unceremoniously. The Duchess of Marlborough was one who never forgot or forgave an affront, and she remembered that the Earl had once, not only opposed the great Duke, her husband, but had paid court to her personal enemy, "Lord Oxford's abigail," the artful Mrs. Masham. The Duchess knew too well what was due to the presence of the Consort of the heir apparent, to express her feelings ; she allowed, therefore, nothing more to escape her than a dry expression of her thanks for the honour the Earl of Peterborough had conferred upon her. Then, without deigning any further notice to him, or to any of the other persons present, she paid her parting compliments to the Princess.

If the style in which the stately old lady entered the room had been a sight worth seeing, much more curious was the manner of her exit.

She held her person as upright as a dart; and attended by the Brigadier, piloted herself out of the apartment with her face turned to the Princess, with a precision that might have been thought extraordinary, by those ignorant of the frequency with which she had previously performed the same manoeuvre.

In the course of the next half hour many other visitors were announced, who gossiped, and went away, and then a message coming that the Prince of Wales awaited her Royal Highness in the reception-room, she graciously dismissed her company; and summoning the attendants, whose duty it was to dress her, assisted by her "good Howard," prepared for the business of the toilet.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FOUR BEAUTIES.

Up jumped Lepel and frisked away,
As though she ran on wheels ;
Miss Meadows made a doleful face,
Miss Howe • • •

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

THIS was a great—a joyous day, at Petersham Manor ;—at least it was expected to be a proud and happy one to its beautiful little mistress. It was the anniversary of her sixteenth birthday, and the Brigadier seemed disposed to make it as joyous for her as possible. With that object in view, a grand party had been invited to dinner, which she cared very little about ; but amongst the guests she had been allowed to invite her school favourites, who were to stay two or three days.

Mary Bellenden was still with her. She had

exhausted her stock of Parisian airs and graces ; yet not without producing its due impression on the Brigadier's daughter. When the accomplished young lady heard that there would shortly arrive two more of her less refined school-fellows, whose astonishment and envy she might excite, she greatly rejoiced. She would have been better pleased had she been allowed to dazzle the whole school, with the once dreaded Penelope Stiffandstern at its head.

To declare the truth, the simplicity of her young friend's character was becoming tedious to her ; her romantic disposition amused her at first, but the very trifling nature of the sources from which it was nourished, gave it too childish an air to suit the more experienced beauty. If it had not been for the genuine affection with which Lord Bellenden's daughter regarded her, that finished young lady would have long been thoroughly sick of her society. As it was, she made amends for her toleration of the daughter, by flirting with the father. The old beau was not insensible to such advances, and taxed his gallantry to the utmost to recommend himself to his fair young guest.

Mary Bellenden was well aware of the exer-

tions that were being made to get her favourably placed at Court, where she was extremely ambitious of going; but of her own destination Mary Lepel had no other means of guessing, than existed in the mysterious hints of her father, and the now encouraging prognostications of his honoured visitor, the great Duchess of Marlborough.

That stately old dame had latterly been very regular in her visits; and had every day she arrived, spoken more and more favourably of her. The fact is, the sweetness of disposition visible in the readiness with which the beautiful girl submitted to her most ungracious observations, had in some degree made tender the tough heart of the great lady; and she began to take a decided interest in her success. She had even condescended to be one of her guests on her birthday.

The Duchess, although become so favourably disposed towards the daughter of her old admirer, did not appear to regard her young companion with anything like the same consideration. Mary Bellenden had played off all her accomplishments;—every Parisian grace had been exhausted before the Duchess; but the old lady looked on

with a cold, contemptuous glance, which all the young one's vivacity could not change.

Lord Bellenden's daughter thought proper to resent this, with an air of studied indifference towards the great Duchess:—often entering into conversation with her friend, without the slightest reference to their stately visitor. The Duchess of Marlborough was too old a courtier to be disconcerted by such a manœuvre, and the only result was, a quiet display of the great lady's contempt, which provoked the saucy beauty still more.

This humiliating behaviour of their visitor made Mary Bellenden long for more congenial society; and the birth day of her friend came as welcome to her, as if she had been the person to whose honour it was devoted. When the chariot arrived which contained two other young ladies and their band-boxes, it was difficult to say who received them with most gratification, her fair hostess or her fair friend.

The visitors came early; they proved to be Sophy Howe, a lovely young creature, who possessed more audacity even than the all-accomplished daughter of Lord Bellenden; and Fanny Meadows, who was as reserved and quiet in her

demeanour as the other was free and daring. As soon as the guests had entered the house and had been presented to the Brigadier—whose reception was a happy mingling of the welcome that ought to be given to the youthful companions of his daughter, with the attentions due to their sex and beauty—they all scampered upstairs to the familiar chamber, where, amid a thousand references to the well remembered establishment at Newington Butts, they began to unburthen their mutual confidences. As all four persisted in making themselves heard at the same moment, it is quite impossible to convey the effect of their revelations; but nothing seemed to be said in vain, notwithstanding the little listening there appeared to be time for.

The new comers soon learned the romantic adventure of the fictitious footman; and they in their turns made their friends acquainted with the mysterious visit of the disbanded soldier, and the audacious conduct of the French master. The four young people then compared notes, and their description of the individual who had managed to obtain access to them, agreeing in many particulars, they one and all came to the conclusion

that Tobias Bastion, Louis le Grand, Pebbles and Philip Dormer were one person

This extraordinary discovery gave rise to a great deal of ingenious speculation respecting the motives of Mr. Dormer in employing such disguises. Of these, Lord Bellenden's daughter considered herself perfectly well aware; but she did not think proper to make known her surmises. The identity of the footman with the Prince's Gentleman of the Bedchamber had been established; and it seemed equally probable that he was the maimed soldier and the ill-behaved Frenchman; in short, with the shrewdest and the fairest schoolfellows, there could remain no doubt of this.

The next subject of consideration was, what was to be done. There was a good deal of apprehension even in the laughter that prevailed amongst the fair gossips, whilst treating of the extraordinary attempt to deceive them. It was mysterious, thought Sophy Howe. Fanny Howards and Mary Lepel hardly knew whether they ought to be most amused or most frightened. Lord Bellenden's daughter suspected the footman of endeavouring to make a selection from

most attractive young beauties in England, to amuse himself with as objects for the display of his gallantry, and began to entertain a strong suspicion that Philip Dormer had deceived her, when he accounted for his appearing in the house under such extraordinary circumstances.

“I vow and protest now,” observed Sophy Howe, her fine full eyes kindling with mischievous animation ; “I am for open war against this Philip Dormer. I think he deserves monstrous little mercy at our hands ; and should he fall into them, the least he could expect is to be tossed in a blanket. Indeed, I strongly advise that for the tricks he has played upon us, we play one upon him, which shall bring him into our power ; and then, girls, we would have such rare sport in seeing his worship springing up into the air, cutting all sorts of indescribable capers, as with a vigorous pull at the four corners of a stout piece of Witney, warranted to bear a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, we sent him up again at every fall.”

The schoolfellows laughed heartily at the idea ; and possibly under such a leader as the proposer of it, had Mr. Dormer ventured amongst them, he might have been placed in the ludicrous position, Miss Howe had described.

"I think it very shocking," said Fanny Meadows, in a more serious tone, "that such undonable deceptions should be suffered to unpunished; it's monstrous! I am quite surman had some atrocious object in view."

"*Sans doute*, child, he had atrocious object view," answered Lord Bellenden's daughter, one of the most effective of her Parisian generations. "Men do not put on disguises to into houses where there are very charming young women, which of course we must consider selves—"

"Oh, of course!" echoed Sophia Howe said as she glanced at the long mirror.

"Without entertaining some wicked designs," added Mary Bellenden. "*Par exemple*, there no doubt he assumed here the part of a domestic the more securely to carry out his villainous intentions against our sweet young hostess."

"Oh, the villain!" exclaimed the sedate Fanny Meadows.

"I only wish he had tried such intentions on me," cried the high-spirited Sophy Howe, with a gay hearted laugh. "Footman or no footman would have had his ardour cooled in the neap pond, where he might have found congenial

lowship with the last litter of puppies that had there been disposed of."

"Positively, my dear Sophy, you are more daring than ever," exclaimed Mary Lepel, whose gentle spirit could not approve of such severe retaliation, for an offence she was half inclined to think excusable. "I am vastly concerned, I must own, that a gentleman of Mr. Dormer's noble family should have entered my father's house in a manner so derogatory; but I am inclined to regard it as an idle frolic, such as many young men of birth and fashion are engaged in every day."

"Of course, my dear," answered Sophy Howe, mockingly; "and in such an idle frolic he came to me, and in a similar harmless manner he went to Fanny Meadows. But then your opinion ought to be much more favourable than ours, for he serenaded you over a garden wall, which with us he never attempted, and I am inclined to think this mightily amiss in him. Had I been entertained with his touching tunes and his tender songs, no doubt I should have taken quite a different view of his case. I begin to think I have been shockingly ill used."

Much of this sort of bantering followed from

each of her attached friends, who could not have resisted such an attempt to raise a laugh at the expense of their young hostess. She had little skill to parry such a combined attack; but without intending it, Mary Bellenden caused a diversion upon herself, by indulging in a speech repeated in a manner so extravagantly French, that Sophy Howe burst out into a loud laugh.

“In the name of every thing ridiculous, what does all this mean?” exclaimed that young lady, staring at her dear friend with an expression of countenance, far from gratifying to the more thoroughly educated daughter of Lord Bellenden. “As I hope for a husband, when I look at you, I doubt you are Mary Bellenden, who used to find such a world of trouble in learning a French verb. I am almost spiteful enough to consider you some female monkey who has seen the world. Did any one see such a head-dress, or so strange a robe? Did any one see such outlandish grimaces and manœuvres? Why, child, your limbs are as restless as if they moved by wires, and being pulled by unskilful hands were all jerked out at once.”

“Ah, *ma chère*, you have not been in Paris!” exclaimed Mary Bellenden, with a sort of pity.

nevertheless in a slight degree put out by her friend's ridicule. "Had you received the advantage of finishing your education at the headquarters of the *beau monde*, you would know better how to appreciate those graces of manner, that must be invaluable to every well-bred woman."

"Dear now, is it possible?" exclaimed the other with well-affected astonishment, "I am wonderstruck!"

"Yes, Sophy," cried the gentle Lepel interposing for her friend, "our dear Mary has come home quite a Frenchwoman."

"I would rather not such an opinion should be stated of me," said Fanny Meadows gravely.

"It is all a matter of taste," exclaimed Miss Howe laughing. "Mary may have profited greatly by her French experience, but if all that Paris can do be to metamorphose one of the brightest ornaments of dear Stiffandstern's school into so bedizened and beshrugged an object as I see before me, why I cannot help thinking I have lost nothing by not finishing my education in France."

"I should like to have gone there vastly," observed the Brigadier's daughter. "I often

find myself wishing I had been as fortunate as our handsome friend."

"Depend on't there's no good breeding out a familiarity with the observances of the French society," drily added Lord Beller's daughter. "It is a pity that the charms of an exquisite friend should be deprived of attraction so likely to set them off to the best advantage. But *ma foi*, how late it is!" suddenly exclaimed she, as she glanced at her watch. "We have been gossiping so long there is barely time to dress for our friend's company. Let us make our toilet at once as quickly as we can."

The young beauties took the hint, and all proceeded to their dressing rooms, where we leave them engaged in the performance of duties which to persons so graced by nature very little required.

CHAPTER X.

A BIRTH-DAY PARTY.

The day is come, her ripened charms appear,
And Cælia closes now the fifteenth year.
The airy sylphs, her ministerial band,
Obedient take their delegated stand ;
To each fair feature give peculiar grace
And add new lustre to an angel's face.

ANON.

BUT how was the Brigadier affected by the arrival of this interesting day ? He was a model of Brigadiers. It is impossible to imagine anything more amiable in the conduct of an elderly gentleman than that which he exhibited towards his daughter and her youthful guests. He showed them his pictures, and his curiosities, not forgetting his gold sugar-basin and all the other beautiful specimens of ostentation with which he had surrounded himself. In particular he went through the vast collection of his own portraits, giving to

each its peculiar history, and dwelling on them all with that deep feeling of affection it was scarcely possible for the Brigadier to help feeling towards a personage so nearly connected with him as the interesting original.

Many were the pertinent observations made by his fair young friends, as the different objects were brought before their observation. Sophy Howe in particular having a word to say on every thing she saw, and Mary Bellenden making it an occasion for referring to every thing she had seen. But the extraordinary number of the likenesses of their friend's father, surprised them exceedingly. They could not exactly understand why one portrait had not been thought enough.

Neither of these young ladies was deficient in shrewdness. They detected the very obvious pride and vanity of their host, and they could have entertained no objection to give it a fair trial. They therefore flattered the foible of the old beau, and praised all they saw belonging to him, and delighted him with the earnestness of their appreciation of portraits, curiosities, tea-chests, and every thing their obliging host allowed them to look at.

The Brigadier grew more and more gratified

with his employment. His gallantry would have led him to derive no slight satisfaction in paying every possible attention to such beautiful young women; but as they were the most intimate friends of his daughter, and they had come to Petersham Manor to do honour to her birth-day, he felt bound to regard them with as much tenderness as he could afford to exhibit under such circumstances.

As the hour of dinner approached, the guests began to arrive thick and fast. They consisted mostly of brother officers and brother courtiers of the Brigadier—persons of a certain influence and standing, whom he could not but be happy to entertain at his table. After putting away their superfluous apparel, they collected in the drawing-room, where their young hostess and her young friends had assembled in full dress to receive them.

It was a very grateful sight to see with what well bred ease the youthful daughter of the Brigadier welcomed her guests as they entered the apartment. Her youth and beauty, set off as they were by all the aids of dress then in requisition, told extremely in her favour. None could look

ture could not escape being the object to her it came not as a mere lip homage, that meant nothing, or an award from the licentious, the meaning of which was not to be expressed, but as a sense of awe due to woman in her purity, loveliness and intelligence.

Among the company who arrived was General Scroop Howe, a rigid man whose soul was devoted to the machinery of war. He marched into the apartment like a ramrod—a tall, thin, dried up man with his head in the air, and a glance at them as scrutinising as he would have given to recruits turning out of barracks for inspection.

He took no notice of his daughter.

and in what regiment—questions he had so frequently asked, that they came from him involuntarily whenever he was obliged to address himself to any stranger. He was a man of very few words, and those few were sure to relate to military matters. Other members of the same profession followed, possessing much the same stiff and pedantic characteristics.

After them came Lord Bellenden, who made directly to his young hostess, and overwhelmed her with compliments;—nodded to his daughter, requested to be introduced to her female friends; stared hard at Sophy Howe, and endeavoured to recommend himself, even to the more reserved Fanny Meadows.

The next name announced was that of Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, a man whose costume was more clerical than his countenance, for the latter was highly expressive of a tendency to good living, which a gouty leg corroborated. He came leaning on the arm of a very pretty modest looking woman, whom it was easy to see was his daughter. His Lordship entered with a graceful air, accosting the young ladies with a degree of freedom which would have been considered highly scandalous in a dignitary of the church a hundred

years later, and addressing the gentlemen with an air of familiarity equally unclerical. But Bishop Amerbury was a great favourite with both sexes to whom he always recommended himself by his admirable social qualities, and the kindness of his disposition.

The next name announced was that of Mr. Secretary Craggs, a tall thin young man, of about thirty, whose handsome features made their appearance irradiated with smiles, and eloquent with condescension: he was a perfect man of the world, could do anything, say anything, and deny anything, with the most perfect good humour, good breeding. After paying his respects to his host and hostess, to whom he made his congratulations in the most expressive manner, he addressed every body in the room in turn; and without appearing to treat any individual with partiality, he endeavoured to make an impression on all, and he was the most agreeable minister they had ever met with.

Very close observers might have remarked, that on his approaching the Bishop, the Secretary of State started a little as in some surprise; though such was the case, the astonishment was too momentary to attract attention, and he

stantly addressed himself to the prelate, even with more cordiality than he had exhibited towards any of the company.

He was followed by the Duke of Ormond, a remarkably graceful and well bred man, in a suit of purple velvet, who passed towards his host with that air of ease and elegance, which is to be seen in perfection only, in the more amiable and more intelligent representatives of some of our most illustrious families.

Then came the Marquis of Dorchester, with his daughter, Lady Wortley Montagu, and her husband. The two former were talking in a very animated manner; but Mr. Wortley Montagu, notwithstanding his intellectual countenance, either had very little to say, or did not think the present a fit time to express it. For so young a man, he appeared very thoughtful. Whether this arose from any uneasiness respecting the conduct of his wife, or respecting the present alarming state of things in England, we cannot say with any confidence.

The old Marquis soon made his way to the ladies, where he rivalled Lord Bellenden in the extent of his homage; and the fervency of his congratulations to his fair young hostess exceeded

by a great deal the intensity of feeling expressed by all the rest of the gentlemen put together.

Next came a curious-looking, lively dame, in an extravagant dress, who was announced as the Duchess of Bolton ; and hardly had she made good her entrance, when with a most undeniable Irish brogue she addressed herself to the company, and complained of the steepness of Richmond hill, which had caused one of her horses to slip down, and cut his knees.

Then she launched out in an apparently endless dissertation on the nature and treatment of broken knees ; at last she recognised her acquaintances amongst the company, only addressing them by wrong names, and reminding them of matters of which they were perfectly ignorant, every such circumstance having occurred to other parties.

However, the Duchess went good humouredly blundering on, making the oddest observations and the most ill-timed remarks, it was possible for her to have made, yet her broad face, and her lustrous eyes beaming with good nature, no one could resist.

The Brigadier had looked towards the door several times, even in the midst of a most animated conversation, with Mr. Secretary Craggs, and t

Duke of Ormond, for by this time, the company had got into little knots of twos and threes; some discussing politics, some petticoats; some the new singer at the opera, and some the new head-dress from Paris. The dinner hour had arrived, but all the guests had not. It was not possible for Brigadier General Lepel to commit such a mistake in good manners, as to look at his watch, especially before a nobleman so distinguished for his breeding, as the Duke of Ormond; but he was getting extremely apprehensive, that the dinner would suffer if the cook was kept waiting much longer, and there was a vast struggle going on in his mind, between his respect for the absent, and his fear of displeasing the present.

At last, to his great relief, the folding doors opened to their full extent, the Duchess of Marlborough was announced, and the next moment that very stately lady entered, evidently attired with more than usual care, and fully intent upon appearing before the guests of her old admirer with more than usual dignity.

There was a curious and not uninteresting lesson exhibited in the fine shades of ceremoniousness with which her Grace behaved to the different individuals whom she chose to honour with a re-

recognition. There was a condescending familiarity in her behaviour to Mary Lepel and her friends which contrasted well with her high bred manner to such people as the Duke of Ormond, the Marquis of Dorchester, and Lord Bellenden, minister of state, Mr. Secretary Craggs, who were entitled to her favourable consideration; but when she knew his father had been a footman, she introduced her to mingle her courtesy with a reserve of dignity. Mr. Wortley Montagu also held a government office, and he was well related to her; she could safely condescend a little. The Bishop of Bath was an old acquaintance, with him she could be familiar and social, without committing herself to any of the officers she seemed to think scarcely worth her notice. There was but one officer, she thought, in the world, and he was the great Duke of Devonshire.

The ladies also had their graduated scale of civility, from the stiff acknowledgment according to Fanny Meadows, up to the dignified salutation to the Duchess of Bolton, and to an Earl, or to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

The Brigadier had scarcely observed the reserve of fine discrimination so elaborately played, when the announcement was given

dinner was ready. He quickly presented himself before the great Duchess, and in his courtliest manner asked permission to hand her Grace to dinner. She condescendingly granted the desired honour, but kindly expressed her wish that his daughter should precede her. Mary Lepel was therefore handed first to the dining room by the elegant Duke of Ormond. She found him a most agreeable companion, and as she walked by his side, did not at all envy "Cleopatra," or "Clelia," or any one of her favorite heroines.

They were followed by the Duchess of Marlborough and her host. The latter as he left the room cast a triumphant glance at his numerous likenesses, who appeared completely to sympathize in his present grandeur. Then came the Duchess of Bolton and the Marquis of Dorchester; the former entertaining her companion with an exceedingly droll story about a Tipperary pig that told fortunes. After them came the fascinating Lady Wortley Montagu and Lord Bellenden. He all gallantry, she scarcely attempting to conceal her ridicule. They were followed by Mr. Secretary Craggs and Mary Bellenden; the well informed Secretary extremely amused by his companion's affectation of French refinement.

The Bishop and Mr. Wortley Montagu laid claim to the blooming Sophy Howe, and laughingly gave her decision in favour of the late, who rewarded her, till she found her with a succession of complimentary observations that made her acknowledge she had lost not by her devotion to the Church. - General Sc Howe had obtained possession of the Bisquet daughter, Mrs. Morice, who was willing to entertain a favourable opinion of his gallantry till as they passed out of the door he demanded in a sharp clear voice, where she had served, in what regiment.

As Fanny Meadows had also been monopolized by another General, with one eye, Mr. Wortley Montagu found himself under the necessity of taking for his companion a little girl with red hair and a pug nose, as she was the only female to receive his attentions. To so fervent an admirer of female beauty, this was rather a disagreeable companionship; but his breeding conquered his refinement, and he led the young lady out of the apartment with quite as much deference as would have displayed, had she been as engaging as Mary Lepel, or as fascinating as Mary Belton.

Some little time elapsed before all the guests had found their proper places. The young hostess sat at the head of a long table, completely covered with massive plate and cut glass, wherever the dishes, or rather their silver covers, allowed sufficient space for them. She was supported on the right by the Duke, and on the left by the Marquis. At the other end of the table sat the Brigadier with the Duchess of Marlborough on his right hand, and the Duchess of Bolton on his left; and a gentleman and lady sat alternately along each side of the table.

After the Bishop had said "Grace," which notwithstanding the unclerical characteristics he had already displayed, he repeated in an exceedingly impressive and fervent manner, soup was served from each end of the table. Behind his young mistress's chair, stood the grave and respectable Rackstraw, keeping a steady glance at his numerous subordinates, and a careful scrutiny at the arrangements of the table. Behind his master, John Coachman had been placed, having been well drilled by his friend the butler, to qualify him for such a post.

The other male servants of the establishment, including Pompey and a tall young man who filled

the place of footman, made vacant by the disappearance of the mysterious James, with several others hired for the occasion, were distributed at intervals along both lines, with strict injunctions to attend to the wants of the guests, with as much celerity as was practicable without breakage or spillage.

With these admirable arrangements the dinner proceeded most admirably. The soup gave place to turbot and salmon, and the fish having been removed, the more substantial dishes made their appearance. At Mary Lepel's end was placed a haunch of venison. The young lady had served the soup, and the fish with matchless grace and facility; but to carve a haunch of venison was altogether another matter. Nevertheless, the Brigadier's daughter went through her task, in a manner that did credit to the instructions of her carving-master. She was so fortunate as to serve every one with their favourite bits, and was from that time forth quoted by the delighted magnates at both ends of the table, as the most accomplished young lady of their acquaintance.

Mary Lepel experienced no small degree of pride as she received the graceful compliments of the Duke of Ormond; she felt her position a very grati-

fyng one—she doubted whether the heroine, even of “*Le Voyage de l’Isle d’Amour*” ever presided at her father’s table to the satisfaction of so many noble guests. She saw her dear school-fellows envied her the admiration her conspicuous position procured her, and her happiness would have been complete could she only have been seen by the peerless Penelope Stiffandstern.

The Duke early asked her to take wine, and then this social ceremony became general—all the ladies had similar invitations, but every gentleman deemed it his duty to pay this mark of respect to his youthful hostess. She acknowledged the compliment with well-bred courtesy, merely touching the wine with lips that looked far more tempting; and as the Bishop for the second time chose to pay her this honour, she could not withhold from herself the pleasing impression that to the best of her knowledge, there was no instance in “*Les Amours d’Aristandre et de Cléonice*,” of a lady having been asked to take wine with no less than eight different gentlemen, including a Duke, a Marquis, a minister of state, three general officers and a Bishop.

As the wine began to circulate, and the appetites of the guests were giving way before the

many good things their hospitable host had before them, the conversation became more animated, and a jest now and then began to be heard, and what was far more to the purpose wit began to be appreciated. More attention was paid to the ladies both old and young; not at any time during the dinner they had been neglected, for that was not a fault likely to be attributed to the gentlemen of the Court of George; but there came now a period more favourable to gallantry, and it was eagerly seized upon.

The stately Duchess of Marlborough dined and said little, though her attentive host was not ceasing in his efforts to please her: the Duke of Bolton, however, made him ample amends for that great lady's silence, for her rich doric flowed on in an apparently inexhaustible stream on every subject, from the fall of man to the stocks.

Lady Wortley Montagu was fascinating to the gentlemen nearest to her by her careless regard of the most ordinary social proprieties, and making brilliant remarks that still further increased their admiration. Mary Bellenden was displaying the most attractive of her Persian acquisitions, and giving utterance to the new

her French phrases, to Mr. Secretary Craggs on one side of her, and Mr. Wortley Montagu on the other ; and felt assured, from their attentions, that she was creating a sensation. Sophy Howe was rattling on very saucily to the Bishop, who was not backward in paying her with her own coin. Fanny Meadows sat quiet and shy, and the rest merely put in a word or two now and then, satisfying themselves with playing the parts of good listeners.

So passed the first and second courses, and so in fact passed the dinner, during the whole period of which the Brigadier's daughter continued to gain upon the admiration of her father's guests, by the very winning manner in which she played her part as an agreeable and attentive hostess, and the perfect style in which she carved every dish set before her—fish, flesh, or fowl.

The enthusiasm of the worthy Bishop was so excited in her favour, that he insisted on taking wine with her a third time, which greatly amused the company, and caused an abundance of witty remarks : the young lady not at all disconcerted nor yet appearing too confident, readily responded to the prelate's challenge. Thanksgiving was then made by the Bishop, and the cloth cleared,

the wine and dessert put on table, and the servants dismissed.

Mary Lepel felt a great relief as she saw the dinner things leave the room. The great success she had taken for a week previously, that the entertainment should do honour to her hospitality was fully recompensed. Compliments had flown in upon her from all quarters, in most instances these came from persons well qualified to pass judgment on the merits of a banquet.

While she was congratulating herself on her complete success she had achieved, she was agreeably surprised by the Duke of Cambridge rising to propose her health, which he did in a language the most refined, and in a manner the most flattering that can be conceived. No toast could have given more universal satisfaction. The gentlemen in a body rose, raised their glasses, and to the name of Mary Lepel tossed off their bumpers with a devotion worthy of so fair a cause. Even the ladies responded to it with a ready alacrity; the Duchess of Marlborough gave to her young friend's name a brief but graceful compliment, and the Duchess of Bolton gave in addition no less sincere, but a considerable

longer, uttered in a racy brogue, that made its expression still more emphatic.

The Brigadier rose, and returned thanks in a neat speech ;—a model of courtly politeness and of gratified vanity. He felt himself a proud, and a happy man. If his daughter could command such success in his own circle, what distinction might she not achieve when removed to a more brilliant sphere ? And then there came a glimpse of Court grandeur, and Court influence, that so dazzled his eyes he could not see that the decanters had stopped opposite to him.

The attentions of the gentlemen towards the ladies now became much more marked. These were the golden moments for conquest and compliment ; and at the table of Brigadier-General Lepel there were very few individuals of the male sex who did not become as tender in their attentions to their fair neighbours, as the privilege of the time allowed. In this general distribution of gallantry, the fair scholars of the estimable Penelope Stiffandstern had nothing to complain of. Mary Lepel, though aiming least at conquest, received the most assiduous attentions from her noble and accomplished neighbours ; her schoolfellows, excepting Fanny Mea-

dows, whose reserve no gallantry could diminish, appeared to be equally well cared for.

The true spirit of conviviality now began to exert itself. Anecdote followed anecdote, and jest succeeded jest, in quick succession. The stately consort of the great Marlborough began to be communicative ; the Irish pleasantries of the Duchess of Bolton became broader and more piquant ; the Bishop told his most effective stories ; Lady Wortley Montagu uttered her most brilliant sallies ; and Lord Bellenden put forth his most exquisite compliments. There was a good deal of talking, and no slight degree of mirth ;—eyes that were bright before, now seemed to float in splendour ; and lips that were so lately admired for the freshness of their colour, now appeared to have their vermilion ripeness bathed in some delicious dew, that gave them a thousand new fascinations.

After the health of their host's admirable daughter had been drunk, other toasts followed. There was "the King," which, of course, was received with all proper respect. It was remarked that the Bishop of Rochester at first did not appear very eager to join in this toast ; but at last he raised his glass, and with a peculiar

emphasis gave, "the King." Whatever there was remarkable in the Prelate's manner, it did not escape the quick eye of the Secretary of State; who, as if to take away any ambiguity there might be in the toast, improved it by saying, with an emphasis equally peculiar, "King George I."

Several loyal and sentimental toasts were also given, and the decanters were going round very merrily, when the Brigadier's daughter caught the eye of her stately friend at the other end of the table, and interpreting its meaning, rose from her seat. Her example was followed by all the ladies of the party. The movement caused a corresponding one in the gentlemen, several of whom hastened to the door.

In the confusion, the Duchess of Marlborough, unperceived glided close to the Bishop of Rochester, and whispered in his ear, "Beware of Craggs!" She then proceeded to follow her charming young hostess, to whom the principal gentlemen were directing a whole quiver of courtly compliments, bowing, as herself and the rest of the ladies passed them to where the more fortunate Duke of Ormond, with the handle of the door in his hand, was addressing every lady with some well-

turned compliment; and as each approach acknowledged her departure with that easy grace for which he was so celebrated.

The Brigadier took his daughter's place, and the gentlemen closed up their ranks; and a plentiful supply of wine having been brought in, the decanters went their round at a brisker pace. The conversation now became much more animated; the most reserved exhibiting a disposition to be heard; and the jests, and anecdotes and stories, exemplified the freedom in which the speakers now thought it proper to indulge.

By the new arrangement, Mr. Secretary Craik was brought next to the Bishop of Rochester, whom he immediately began to pay the most particular attention; challenging him to ten bumpers, and giving loose to the jovial spirit of the moment, with a zest that could scarcely be of recommending him to so eminently social personage, as the worthy Prelate.

On the other side of the Bishop sat Mr. Wodeley Montagu, who was no less assiduous in his attentions. It was rather strange, though, while one drew him into a lively discussion the other kept carefully replenishing his wine glass; and the extreme friendliness which be

evinced in their conduct, the high estimation they gave him to understand they felt for his abilities, and the sincere affection with which they regarded his virtues, could not but be highly gratifying to a person of the Bishop's warm temperament, particularly as all this proceeded from a minister of state high in the confidence of his sovereign, and from a member of a distinguished family, holding a handsome post at Court.

His Lordship had reason to congratulate himself on possessing powerful friends in such a quarter, as he had been completely neglected since the present sovereign came to the throne; the King having on one occasion treated him with marked rudeness owing to his exertions in favour of the exiled Stuarts, which at the death of Queen Anne had been more prominent than discreet. And since he had received this treatment he was well aware that his secret proceedings had been of such a character as in case of discovery to make such friends highly desirable.

The Bishop was in high spirits, pouring forth a flood of social pleasantry that kept his companions in ecstasies, and at every fresh bumper he quaffed giving utterance to some admirable jest more pointed than any of its numerous pre-

decessors. By some means or other that never failing subject of ridicule the King's mistress was started, and nothing could exceed the manner with which he referred to the tall, scrawny Schulenburg, and made allusion to the blowsy Kielmansegge.

Mr. Secretary Craggs now seemed to take Bishop entirely into his own hands, for his adjutor was engaged in an animated argument with Lord Bellenden as to the relative merit of two rival dancers who had lately appeared at King's Theatre in the Haymarket. The prelate had drunk what was a large quantity of wine even in those days, when from three to four bottles were very frequently the allowance for sitting; and he looked and talked as if it was exerting its influence upon him.

Mr. Secretary became extremely confidential and mysterious—dropped his voice to a whisper—alluded to “a party over the water”—intimated that he had friends in quarters he did not communicate upon, and in an ambiguous manner appeared to desire nothing so much as the perfect success of those plans which he was well aware that the spy-sonage was pursuing.

The Bishop's faculties might have been a li

affected by his copious draughts of his host's claret. He well understood these allusions to the Pretender, and did not see anything remarkable in a Secretary of State to King George I. being so disgusted with his service as to be anxious for a master in the son of James II. He had known of similar things taking place; and thrown off his guard by the apparent sincerity of his companion, he was about to explain the designs—with which he was well acquainted—the Chevalier St. George, as he was usually styled, was carrying out to recover the crown his father had lost, when the whispered warning of his friend the Duchess of Marlborough, which he had totally forgotten, recurred to him.

He saw the imminent danger in which he stood—and this sense of the great peril in which he had placed himself and his friends, sobered him in an instant. He saw too, or fancied he saw the manœuvre of the wily statesman beside him in the apparent attentions he exhibited that his glass should never be empty, whilst he now remembered the crafty Secretary seldom had recourse to his own. The Bishop blessed his old friend for her foresight, and cursed himself for a blockhead.

He contrived however very adroitly to change

the subject without further committing himself; and notwithstanding the many clever efforts made by his associate to obtain his confidence, eluded making any communication that could prove he knew more of the intentions of the Pretender than had been borne to him by public rumour.

In the mean time the remainder of the Brigadier's guests had been proceeding with their potations with such good will that their effects could not be mistaken. Their faces were flushed, their wigs awry; some had soiled their delicate ruffles, and others had creased their magnificent waistcoats. Shouting, laughing, singing, seemed to be mingled together in a riotous jumble—every gentleman was made to toast his favourite lady, and several appeared ready to vouch for her superiority in personal attractions, and for the generosity of her disposition in their favour. It did not seem to signify a rush to any, that the warmest of these panegyrists were married men, and that the several kind charmers they alluded to, were nearly related to others of the company.

The Brigadier vainly attempted to obtain silence; and on his legs, holding fast by the table to support himself, he shouted and hiccuped with a praiseworthy perseverance—the only effect of

which for some time, seemed to be to make General Scroop Howe, who had fallen asleep—his wig having completely parted company with his bald head—open one eye. But not having the power to keep the heavy lids apart, they closed again, and he continued his snoring with redoubled energy.

“Gentlemen! gentlemen!” (Hiccup!) exclaimed the unsteady host for the twentieth time, looking with an air of ridiculous gravity towards his noisy guests—“the Marquis—(hiccup)—the Marquis gentlemen—(hiccup)—the Marquis’s song—(hiccup)—We must have my Lord Marquis’s song.”

“Silence!” shouted the Duke of Ormond, as he took up a lemon squeezer that had been in requisition for making punch, and struck the table with such force that the heavy sleeper jumped up with staring eyes, still dreaming he was attacking a battery at the head of his regiment.

“Fix bayonets! Charge!” he shouted with all the force of his lungs, and fell back to his former position. This raised a general laugh, and in the confusion the Bishop of Rochester slipped out of the room. The Marquis of Dorchester found that he might count on a tolerably attentive

Come, jolly shepherd, now fold up :

The sun has gone down to his bed

Come pull at the pitcher, and list to

We've a right to be merry as well

The lads are all seeking their fiddles

Let them jig with the lasses as long

Let us quaff this brown ale like a pair

And merrily, jollily, drink Care away

“Chorus!” called out the singer
 word all the company who
 of their voices, bawled in the
 manner :—

CHORUS.

Come, jolly shepherd, now fold up ye

The sun has gone down to his bed :

Come pull at the pitcher, and list to the

We've a right to be merry as well as

The Marquis resumed his solo

Let the saints, as they strive to look solemn and sober,
Of their threats and their judgments at once take their fill ;
While we can enjoy such a jug of October,
Things can't be so bad, let them say what they will.

“Chorus !” bawled out the Marquis again.
“And every man standing upon his chair.”

This command was more easily made than followed ; and ludicrous were the attempts to obtain the required elevation. Some began to mount at the back of the chair, others less ambitious strove to get up from the front ; but the stumbles, the slips, and the struggles of the less sober of the party were extremely diverting to the rest. The Brigadier, with an admirable patience had lifted one foot and then another ; but at every attempt to elevate it to the seat, holding fast to the arms, he always swung himself round to the side, where getting up was impossible.

At last he made a vigorous effort ; but in doing so, contrived to lose his hold, and in a moment came with a considerable concussion against Lord Bellenden, who was similarly circumstanced ; they then both went stumbling along the floor till they recovered their perpendicular by the assistance of the wall. They looked at each other with an immense deal of gravity, and wished,

like well-bred men, to bow and apologize; but both knew what the effort would cost them. The old beau's politeness, however, triumphed, and he was beginning to hiccup his concern at the accident, when he felt his feet sliding, and down he went with undiminished gravity, till he found himself in a sitting posture on the floor.

The other, with spontaneous civility, held out his hand to assist his friend to rise, and of course immediately found himself in the same predicament; and as the chorus of their more successful friends had commenced from the few chairs that were occupied, they, with all the solemnity of judges, joined in it from their less aspiring, but much safer positions.

CHORUS.

Come, jolly shepherd, now fold up your ewes,

The sun has gone down to his bed in the west.

Come pull at the pitcher, and list to the news,

We've a right to be merry as well as the rest.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MYSTERIOUS ASSIGNATION.

This little spot of earth you stand upon
Is more to me than the extended plains
Of my great father's kingdom. Here I reign
In full delights, in joys to power unknown ;
Your love my empire, and your heart my throne.

THOMAS SOUTHERNE.

WHEN the ladies retired from the dinner-room, they proceeded to a long apartment at the back of the mansion, which had been prepared for dancing. A small orchestra had been erected, in which a harp, two fiddles, and as many flutes, were already in full action. The younger members of many of the neighbouring families had been invited to the dance, and they began to arrive as their fair young hostess made her appearance in the room.

Dancing speedily commenced ; minuets, gavot-

too, were advancing rapidly in their partners.

Mary Bellenden's French produced a prodigious effect; irresistible, with her soft language captivating freedoms; and even distant Fanny Meadows found and partners sufficient to satiate the quettish of school girls. Nevertheless the young beauties who had all too lately enjoyed several of the most elegant men now the compliments of their partners sounded vapid and uninteresting.

The Duchess of Bolton and her drolleries; still they were for the appearance of their

one country dance, and then departed; as did also the two Duchesses, and Lady Mary.

Supper was announced. The company partook of a slight repast, then resumed their dancing with renewed vigour. The fair pupils of Minerva House strove to abandon themselves to their present enjoyments, with their usual high sense of pleasure; but neither minuet, nor country dance appeared to gratify them; and they felt a great relief when the last of their young associates had departed, and they could be at liberty to retire to their several rooms.

The first thing that attracted the attention of Mary Lepel on entering her bedroom, was a small, highly scented *billet*, lying on the dressing-table, addressed to her. She reflected but a short time, whether she should open it. Her little head was as full of romance as her heart was of innocence. It was not exactly right, she thought, to receive clandestine communications; but then no heroine, to the best of her knowledge, had ever sent back so very nice looking a *billet*.

Then she should be obliged to open it to know where to send it to;—then again, it might come from a concealed admirer, possessed of as many perfections as her favourite Prince Oroondates.

With a trembling hand, and a palpitating heart she broke the seal—a Cupid with his finger on his lips. This was sufficiently significant. She read the following sentences :—

“It is respectfully, yet earnestly requested of the writer—who is a person of distinction and honour—that the incomparable Mary Lepel, honour one of the most devoted of her innumerable adorers, by appearing with her fair visit and any additional escort she pleases, in the Park Walk, at the hour the company usually assemble. An affair of the utmost consequence to happiness depends on her complying with this request, without the least delay, with respect to which it is equally necessary she should maintain the strictest secrecy.”

To say the Brigadier's daughter was astonished would be using an inadequate expression. She was perfectly bewildered. She knew not what to make of so singular an application. An association she had always heard was generally requested to be as private as possible; but the writer desired to meet her surrounded by her friends!

It was most strange. Who could it be? Surely some one among her guests of this brilliant day. But she could not decide who.

could he want? Nothing very dangerous, or he would have desired a private meeting. Should she accede to the request? It was an adventure of the most mysterious description; in all her reading she had never met with any heroine to whom such an application had been made. It might lead to something, as the writer said, of consequence to her happiness. In so public a place, and protected by her companions, it was impossible harm could come to her. She would go.

Mary Lepel said her prayers and went to bed, and dreamt a good ten volumes of romantic adventures.

Exactly at the same moment each of her schoolfellows in the privacy of her own chamber discovered a similar billet directed to her, and on reading it made out exactly the same seal and the same words, (with the alteration of the name of the party addressed,) that had so mystified and astonished the Brigadier's daughter. Mary Belenden and Sophy Howe decided at once upon going; Fanny Meadows was half inclined not to venture, as the unknown writer might build some improper hope upon such an accordence with his

wishes. Finally her curiosity got the better of her prudery, and she also determined to go.

It has been declared that these very attached friends were bound together by the strong tie of mutual confidence. It might, therefore, very reasonably be imagined, that their first act on meeting in the morning would be to acquaint each other with the strange communication that had been made to them. They did nothing of the kind. These confidential friends most carefully kept their secret from each other. They chattered away during the morning, with great fluency on the events of the preceding day, without giving the slightest intimation of the most interesting of all.

The Brigadier came down to breakfast, looking extremely lugubrious. He tried to behave becomingly towards his beautiful visitors. But he was so dull that his portraits, one and all, must have been ashamed of him. He apologised for not being in his usual good spirits, and laid the blame on flying symptoms of gout ; he would have been more correct had he stated flying symptoms of claret. But his fair daughter and her fair friends most charmingly excused his deficien-

cies; in fact, they were too much taken up with thinking upon their approaching assignation to heed him.

This event, notwithstanding the air of pleasant thoughtlessness each of the sworn friends assumed, was exerting a powerful influence over their minds. Each was speculating upon the station in life, the appearance, and the disposition of her unknown admirer, and building as many castles in the air as would have required a very large surface for their foundations.

It must here be remarked that the general bias of Mary Lepel's nature was towards an unreserved confidence; and nothing but the strictness with which, in the mysterious communication she had received, secrecy had been insisted on, prevented her from acquainting her beloved friends with the whole affair. Her beloved friends were, however, a little older;—and in worldly knowledge some of them a great deal wiser. The confidence reposed in them by the writer they would not have regarded, had they not been assured the adventure could not be properly carried out by preserving it. But they most decidedly were against admitting either of their affectionate and trusty schoolfellows into their secret.

It was extraordinary when the Brigadier's daughter, at the close of the morning meal intimated a wish that her visitors should enjoy a pleasant promenade in Ham Walk, how unanimous her devoted friends were in seconding it. Each had heard of the fashion this spot possessed, and all were aware that many distinguished people were always to be seen there at a certain hour every day.

Sophy Howe had caught up the paper on the breakfast-table, which the gallant old Brigadier, in the presence of the ladies, had carefully abstained from looking at, and in a very merry manner read an advertisement from it, in which the poet Pope denied a report, that some malicious enemy had circulated, to the effect that he had been cudgelled in this favourite place of public resort. The Brigadier joined in the conversation, and was readily persuaded to escort the young beauties to a place so celebrated.

Everything seemed to favour the secret project of the youthful adventuresses ; and neither entertained the slightest suspicion that the mysterious assignation included either of her schoolfellow or was in any way known to one of them. The time drew near, and they retired for the purpose of getting themselves ready for their walk.

The care they had taken with their yesterday's toilet bore no comparison to the attention with which they now put on their most becoming walking costume. Even Mary Bellenden, who according to her own statements had been so familiar with adventures, looked upon the anticipated meeting as deserving all her knowledge of personal decoration in preparing herself for it.

The Brigadier, whose toilet was always carefully made, considered that his publicly appearing with four such charming young creatures as he was about to escort, demanded more than ordinary attention in his dress, and he occupied an additional half hour in his preparations. At last the old beau appeared before his impatient companions, in a new wig—a fawn-coloured velvet coat descending to his knees, laced with gold, with splendid ruffles at the end of its immense cuffs; it was buttoned only a little way up the breast so as to disclose the fineness of the cambric frill that covered his shirt. His breeches were also of velvet; and he wore the usual high shoes, with fine stockings beautifully worked up the leg. In one hand he carried a clouded cane; he held a three cornered cocked hat under his arm, and the handle of his sword projected from the side of his

coat, the end of the scabbard appearing a little below the left knee.

The ladies were already prepared. His daughter wore a scarlet cardinal, in the hood of which, her beautiful and very youthful face looked inexpressibly interesting. Below the cardinal she had put on a moderately hooped petticoat, of a recent fashion, called an *allejah* petticoat, striped with green, gold and white.

Mary Bellenden came forth in a head of fine looped lace, fresh from Paris, with a scarlet and gold atlas petticoat edged with silver, having an extensive hoop. Her stomacher was laced in front. She wore a small apron, trimmed with lace. Two or three patches in the last Parisian fashion appeared upon her face; and a fine cambric handkerchief was held in her white hand.

Sophy Howe wore a Flanders laced hood with a blue and silver silk gown and petticoat; and Fanny Meadows a white beaver hat, faced with pink silk and trimmed with gold, with a flowered silk gown and petticoat. They all wore the ordinary walking shoes and stockings; but not one thought it necessary to take a mask—very judiciously imagining that if she wished to be recog-

nised, she must appear without such a customary addition to a lady's walking dress.

In this manner they left Petersham Manor, and taking the road to Ham, were in a few minutes proceeding down a narrow lane, leading to a large mansion, a short distance to which, an avenue of lofty trees shaded a delightful verdant promenade, known to all the fashionable world at this period. The Brigadier walked between Sophy Howe and Fanny Meadows. Both young ladies were remarkable for their beauty, though there existed a marked contrast in the two. The fair Sophy looking as impassioned as the other looked unsusceptible.

They were followed by Mary Lepel and Mary Bellenden. Both possessed a striking style of beauty—of a higher and more intellectual order than that of their young schoolfellows. Lord Bellenden's daughter was much the more mature beauty, her figure being more developed; but the freshness of the look of her companion, the transparency of her skin, the natural elegance of her movements would, amongst the best judges of female loveliness, have carried off the palm from her very accomplished rival.

Before they had entered upon the walk, they

attended by sedan-chairs, man
in requisition for the use of
being carried.

At last they came upon a crowd
persons of both sexes, slowly
down the walk; some stopping
courtesies with their friends, and
budget of gossip, scandal, politics
they chose to converse about.
wore masks; many wore patches
their masks in their hands, and
and criticising, and coquetting with
industry. Some wore hats, so
“heads;” and their dresses were
costly materials, and from the
and richness of material gave them
markably picturesque effect.

The gentlemen wore three cor

in their apparel, and it was usually very rich, of velvet or dark cloth laced with gold. Many carried handsome canes; some affecting eccentricity, bore a tremendous staff nearly as tall as themselves, with a grotesque head carved at the top, such as the Earl of Peterborough brought with him into the chamber of the Princess of Wales.

The appearance of the Brigadier with his beautiful charge attracted general attention as soon as they entered on the walk. The ladies stared with astonishment, the gentlemen with admiration. In the general company there were several females possessed of considerable personal attractions, but being ladies of fashion, accustomed to dissipation and racket, their beauty wore a faded look, which contrasted very unsatisfactorily with the blooming fascinations of the more youthful beauties who now appeared upon the scene.

The enchanting faces and graceful figures of Fanny Meadows and Sophy Howe excited much attention; but the gaze of the observers falling immediately afterwards upon the still more lovely Mary Bellenden, and her exquisite and beautiful companion, the impression they made was more transitory than it would otherwise have been.

However great may have been the personal advantages of her fair schoolfellows, it was evident before long that the innocence and purity that appeared to breathe in the admirable countenance of Mary Lepel, caused her to be the favourite of all persons possessed of genuine taste who were to be found amongst the numerous gay promenaders of Ham Walk.

Brigadier General Lepel was quite as much in his element in the midst of this gay crowd, having about him four of the most beautiful women it contained, as he could have been in his more martial days leading his troops against the enemy. His heaviness and dullness, the result of the previous day's debauch, seemed totally to have left him, and his eye brightened and his back became more erect as he addressed himself to the youthful beauties on each side of him, or gracefully returned the courtesies of some of his friends who thought proper to confer on the old beau the honour of a recognition.

The behaviour of his very attractive charge was not much more varied than their thoughts. Each fair damsel was in anxious expectation of receiving some secret sign from her unknown adorer, and strove to disguise her anxiety by

keeping up a continued conversation respecting the more remarkable persons she passed. 'The persons of some were known to Lord Bellenden's daughter, and she also pretended to be familiar with their characters and histories, on which she managed to say a great deal more than deserves repetition.

"*Voilà, ma mignonne !*" she exclaimed with a gesture so French that there could be no disputing its nationality, "do you see that very rakish looking man by the trees yonder?" And she pointed to a gaily dressed old nobleman standing under some trees at a little distance, talking with an elderly lady, very much patched, and very much painted. "That, child, is John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham. A dear horrid wretch of a man—a great foe to female innocence. *Prenez garde, ma chère*—the man is absolutely a monster. He has betrayed scores of poor trusting women to ruin, and commits the most abominable actions when engaged in his nefarious schemes. *Ma foi*, I am astonished they do not chain up such wretches."

Mary Lepel looked at the pallid libertine, and felt shocked at the existence of such depravity.

"The lady to whom he is talking," continued

the speaker, "is worthy of his companionship. You see the remains of a royal mistress; *sans doute* one of the beauties of the Court of Charles II. You behold all that time has left of the Duchess of Cleveland. Ah, child, it is lamentable to behold that painted mass of wrinkles striving to maintain a bad influence over a generation that were in their cradles when that bad influence was first called into action. *O bon Dieu!* I am amazed at her impudence."

The ruin of the once powerful and profligate beauty, that reared its trembling head among so many fresh and admirable forms, was certainly not entitled to create respect. The garish antiquity seemed revolting to the unsophisticated nature of the pure-minded Mary Lepel.

"But do you see that dignified personage coming along the walk in the midst of a small crowd of what are evidently his particular friends?" inquired Lord Bellenden's daughter, directing the attention of her friend to an approaching group who seemed to be all engaged in an animated discussion. "*Oh mon Dieu!* how are the mighty fallen! A few short months he was one of the most powerful men at Court, as he was the ablest. Now, if what I have heard be

true, he has not sufficient influence to save himself from impending ruin.' That is the celebrated St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke. You may observe that, with the exception of his companions, who are certain authors and poets whose company he assumes to delight in, scarcely any one notices him. It is well known he is a doomed man.

"Some of his companions I think you have seen before. That crooked little fellow talking with so rapt an air is, you know, Mr. Pope, our Twickenham acquaintance; and the equally undignified parson-like personage, whose laugh seems so caustic, is the new Dean of St. Patrick's, Jonathan Swift. The more serious and thoughtful friend beside him is another great scholar, Dr. Warburton. Then there is Addison, who looks more like a gentleman than any of his associates. *Ma foi!* he may have gained his gentility from the wife he has lately married, who is a lady of quality, or he may have acquired it at Court, for he has had some employment there. There is a vastly pleasant creature in the same group,—his name is Gay. You will like him monstrously when you come to know him.

"Oh, *ma mignonne*—observe that bold, dash-

ing-looking young man, in the velvet coat trimmed with silver. His countenance wearing that decided devil-may-care expression which can only belong to such restless, riotous spirits. He is making up to Lord Bolingbroke, determined to notice him in the most public manner, because he sees every body else afraid to go too near him. That is the notorious Philip, Duke of Wharton ; a man of many follies, some crimes, and perhaps a few, a very few good qualities. But he is wild as an unbroken colt—a dear, tormenting devil, who is ever being engaged in the maddest extravagances that ever distinguished an inmate of Bedlam.”

As the young Duke looked handsome, and was not ill made, the Brigadier’s daughter thought it a thousand pities he should possess so bad a character. But a great deal of this she had known before, as his outrages against public order and public decency had established for him an unenviable reputation.

“ *Parbleu !* this is strange !” exclaimed the young beauty loud enough to be heard by such of the company as were passing ; “ I scarcely expected to meet his Grace here. You see that pompous man, child, who looks so solemn as he walks along, scarcely deigning to acknowledge the

salutation of an inferior. That is the Duke of Newcastle. Here too comes the old Duke of Somerset—the little well shaped man with a black complexion. He is even a prouder man than his Grace of Newcastle. They salute each other—see how the pompous Newcastle cringes to his stern superior, and how haughtily the old peer returns his greeting. *C'est un homme rigide* ; he looks as if he could scarcely be brought to bow to his sovereign—as though he thought the Somersets had no equals on earth.”

The meeting of the two Dukes was certainly a singular one, and attracted other observers besides Mary Bellenden.

“ *Ma foi*, here come some of our pleasant associates of yesterday. There is the intellectual and well bred Duke of Ormond, with Mr. Wortley Montagu and Lady Mary. *Bon Dieu*, how she is flirting with the Duke ! Odious woman ! her conduct is really getting too bad. She monopolizes all the handsomest and best bred men she meets with ; and she dresses so vastly well ! *Elle s'est donnée de belles robes*.”

The two parties met, and accosted each other with well bred civility ; Lady Wortley Montagu seeming particularly delighted at the meeting.

The Duke of Ormond did not seem, but was delighted. He had seen the beauties in full dress, but in morning dress he thought them still more bewitching. He paid his compliments with the refinement of a scholar and the ease of a gentleman.

The Brigadier was equally pleased with the rencontre. To be seen talking to a Duke was far from being disagreeable to him; but to be seen in conversation with a nobleman ranking so high in the arts of elegance and courtesy as the Duke of Ormond, was an honour which he was ready to appreciate at its full value; nor was he indifferent to the notice of so fashionable and beautiful a woman as the lady who accompanied him.

The fair associates of the Brigadier were equally well pleased at being accosted by his Grace; they were more, they were a little anxious. They entertained an impression that the Duke was the writer of their mysterious communication, and each fully expected he would afford her some sign of recognition. Under such influence they were differently affected: Lord Bellenden's daughter displayed all the resources of her Parisian education to fascinate him into some kind of declaration of his sentiments towards her; Sophy

Howe exhibited her dashing spirit in a manner that seemed intended to take him by storm; Fanny Meadows was more distant and reserved than ever. She wore a sort of touch me not look, possibly intended to excite the Duke of Ormond by the difficulties of the enterprise. Mary Lepel could not help feeling under some apprehension. She was pale and red by turns; in truth she was not a little bewildered by her own imagination.

To the astonishment of the school-fellows, the Duke proceeded onwards with his friends without giving any recognition, or affording either of the disappointed beauties any evidence on which to ground her supposition, that he was in the slightest degree concerned in the matter that engrossed her thoughts.

The Brigadier continued his observations, but his fair friends remained silent for some few minutes. By degrees they recovered the use of their voices, and Mary Bellenden resumed her commentaries on the company. The Duchess of Bolton was next recognised; she was approaching them, conversing in her usual eccentric manner with a man of disagreeable physiognomy, hard, severe, and stern, with a reckless

spirit in his restless eyes that seemed ready for any evil.

“Arrah now, who’d have thought it!” cried out the Duchess seemingly in some surprise. “The top of the morning to you, my darlings; it’s pleased I am to see you, Brigadier, in company with these illegant craythurs; no gamecock ever held his head so proud in the midst of his hens, as you hold yourself this blessed day—small blame to you. Were I a man, let alone a Gin’ral, attending upon so many beautiful angels, it’s myself that would hardly find a place big enough to hold me.”

The Duchess laughed good humouredly, and her friends joined in her mirth with equal heartiness. “I was telling my Lord Berkeley here,” she continued turning to her companions, “that Ham Walk isn’t the place it used to be: indeed and on my honour it’s a different spot entirely. May be it’s the company’s altered, for divil a Christian soul I see of ’em but seems struggling to look as ugly as Old Nick, out of compliment I hear to some persons at Court, who it has been said have taken out a patent for frightening the crows. But when I look on your charming daughter, and her charming friends, Brigadier,

I'm in hopes the people 'll try and look as contrary as they can, so I do, that the place may appear dacent for quiet peaceable folks like you and I."

The Duchess of Bolton laughingly passed on with the Earl of Berkeley, who had amused himself during their short stoppage by staring somewhat rudely at the young beauties. They thought by this scrutiny that his Lordship must be the person of whom they were in search, and fully anticipated receiving some sign that should place this beyond a doubt. No sign, however, came. My Lord Berkeley finished his scrutiny, made his bow, and they saw no more of him.

Here was another disappointment. It certainly looked rather provoking, that after our young beauties had made up their minds to agree to a proposed assignation, no one appeared to wish to have any communication to make to them. Mary Belenden and Sophy Howe fancied they might as well have stayed where they were. Fanny Meadows began to consider she had been very imprudent; and Mary Lepel took some pains to satisfy herself that in all such adventures as she was engaged in, she knew of none in the course of her comprehensive reading, where the gentleman having re-

quested a secret interview, failed to keep his appointment.

Again they were stopped ; but this time it was by the gossiping Duke of Devonshire, accompanied by two or three young men of family, whom his Grace had been entertaining with his agreeable reminiscences. He introduced his companions ; they were by no means undesirable persons with whom to have an assignation ; and the troubled beauties were quite at a loss to determine whether the Duke of Devonshire or one of his friends were the writer of the mysterious billets.

They watched carefully ; but no evidence of the kind they looked for proceeded from his Grace or from his associates ; and when the party went on without sign or signal, the lovely faces of the fair company the Brigadier had in charge wore an expression that assuredly did not add to their attractiveness, though it could take very little from it. The more experienced began to entertain suspicions that they had been played a trick ; and when the thought entered their minds that they had been brought there only to be laughed at, they felt exceedingly indignant.

Mary Lepel, however, did not suppose this ;

she was too charitable, and perhaps too romantic to imagine such a thing. She felt satisfied a meeting had been intended, and could not but believe that some one or other of those numerous accidents that had so often set at nought the best intentions of the greatest heroes and heroines of her acquaintance, had prevented the writer of her mysterious communication from presenting himself before her at the place he had appointed for their interview.

But the hopes and fears of the little party were suddenly diverted by a great stir amongst the well-dressed crowd a little way in advance of them. The gentlemen were seen to take off their hats and bow with every outward show of respect; and with their fair companions to draw back on each side of the walk as if forming a lane for some party then advancing. This scene created some excitement in the breasts of Mary Lepel and her fair schoolfellows. They all knew it must mean something; and with a feeling natural to the sex, were extremely curious to know what something it meant.

At last as the company fell back before them a little man was seen, as plain in person as he was in dress, accompanied by two or three distinguished

looking gentlemen in full court-dress, in a somewhat awkward manner returning the courtesies of the persons by whom he was recognised.

"As I live," exclaimed the Brigadier with slight astonishment, "'tis the Prince."

"The Prince!" simultaneously cried four female voices with surprise equally genuine.

The Brigadier was right. The little man in snuff-coloured coat, who had caused so much commotion in Ham Walk, was the Prince of Wales and he was not recognised by the party from Woburn Manor till only a very short distance intervened between the Brigadier and his ladies, and the Prince and his gentlemen.

Off went the cocked hat of Brigadier General Lepel, and the old beau performed a genuflection such as he had never attempted since those glorious days when he flourished so successfully at the Court of King William, the first gentleman of his day. Having effected this mark of respect, the Brigadier was about to back to the side of the wheel, fully expecting that the Prince, after some slight acknowledgment of his greeting, would pass by his way.

But it was evident his Royal Highness had no such intention. Instead of passing the old gentleman and his fair companions as he had passed

the other groups, that had treated him with equal respect, as soon as the Prince arrived close to the little party, he shewed no disposition for moving.

“Ah mine goot vriend Prigadier,” he exclaimed, his honest, though somewhat homely face lighting up with exultation as if he was meeting the best friend man ever knew. “I am petter bleased to zee you, dan I can exbress. And how is all your plooming vamily, mine goot vriend? Dese young ladies is your taughters, eh Prigadier?”

“No, please your Royal Highness;” commenced that courtly officer, still bowing to his interrogator.

“No! dese young ladies is not your taughters! den whose sharming taughters you call dem, mine vriend?” And the Prince gazed from one to the other in unfeigned astonishment at their extraordinary beauty.

“Please your Royal Highness,” again commenced the Brigadier, “I have but one daughter.”

“You have but von sharming taughter, eh Prigadier! Vell I am zurprize you shall have no more dan von. But vich von is dat, mine vriend, for dey is all so pootivul, it is imbossible to shudge vich von it shall be.”

“Please your Royal Highness, here is my

daughter," and the blushing modest Mary Le stood before the Prince in all her pure and innocent beauty. The effect seemed to be magical. The Prince gazed like one entranced; he never before beheld a face so perfect, and so exquisite in its expression. For some seconds, said not a word.

"My God!" he at last exclaimed in German with intense fervour, "this must be an angel fresh from Heaven!" Then added in his customary English, with a degree of respect he found he could not help feeling as he gazed upon her, "Madam Lepel, believe me I am most beholden to your good father for such agreeable acquaintance. But such agreeable acquaintance is only begun; must be good friends. I am sure we shall become good friends. Der Prigadier shall take you to Court to be introduced to mine wife, and the Princess shall be every thing to you that is agreeable and proper."

Mary Lepel curtsied, and in a few general words expressed her gratitude for his Royal Highness's condescension.

"Not at all, Madam Lepel, not at all!" replied the Prince hurriedly, "mine wife shall be delighted to make you as blest as possible; every pe-

shall be telighted. I mosh beg you mine goot vriend," he added turning from the daughter to the father, "to pring Madam Lepel to Court at vonce. Dere mosh be no telay ; dere mosh pe no exkuzes; mine vife is not to pe disabbointed. Vhat you say, eh Prigadier ?"

The old beau in courtly language acknowledged the honour, and readily promised to attend to his Royal Highness's commands.

The Prince then, though apparently reluctant to take his eyes off so fair a vision, asked who were the other ladies, and they were severally introduced to him with all the graceful ceremoniousness of which the Brigadier was master. His Royal Highness beheld much to admire in each of them, but he could not help occasionally taking off his eyes from their more developed loveliness to glance again at that rare style of beauty that had made so strong an impression upon him.

With something very like gallantry, though it was not of the most refined description, he expressed his admiration to the young beauties, and desired that they should make their appearance at Court in company with the Brigadier's daughter. Then with a few more congratulatory remarks to

the old beau, and another enraptured glance at his admirable daughter, he gallantly took off his hat to the party, and passed on. His suite did the same.

If the fair school-fellows had created an impression on their first appearance in Ham Walk, it had increased a hundred fold after the honour so publicly conferred upon them by the Prince of Wales; and Mary Lepel and her young companions were so delighted with their invitations and the interest they had excited, they quite forgot the mysterious communication that had brought them there.

A happy man was Brigadier General Lepel that day. As he promenaded through the line of curious fashionables, he felt he would not change places with the most distinguished personage amongst them.

“Mein Got!” exclaimed the Prince, when he had got out of hearing of his new acquaintances, “Every von is a veenix and noting else but a veenix; but as for der Prigadier’s taughter, ven I look at her she make me veel as innocent as von littel shild. Ha,” he added with a chuckle of infinite satisfaction, aside to his nearest com-

panion, who was the gay and handsome Philip Dormer, "I am imbatient for her to abbear at Court, for dose dam antederluvian grockodiles vill be ready to hang demselves as soon as dey shall catch zight of her."

CHAPTER XII.

A BISHOP "EN PRISE."

Evident proofs will appear of a meeting having been held by some considerable persons, one of whom is not far off, wherein it was proposed to proclaim the Pretender at the Royal Exchange.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

FROM one or two hints that have been dropped during the course of this narrative, the reader must have entertained a suspicion that the new King of England was anything but popular with his new subjects; but this is but a faint idea of the state of public feeling in England. The shameless system of plunder pursued by his German dependants of both sexes, together with the repulsive behaviour of the sovereign, had disgust-

ed all ranks, and this feeling had been taken such advantage of by the agents of the son of James II. the Pretender as he was called, that the country was believed to be on the brink of rebellion, and a wide spread conspiracy, in which many persons of distinction were suspected of being concerned, there were several reasons for believing existed.

Society at this period was in a state of extraordinary ferment. The numerous friends of the Pretender were daily becoming bolder, and the feeling against the King hourly increasing in animosity. The ministers of George I. were well aware of the critical state of affairs, and were employing every engine to avert the threatened danger. To learn how to distinguish friends from enemies, and to obtain information of the intrigues that were going on, they employed spies to watch the movements of all persons supposed to be averse to the Hanoverian rule; but this only made the conspirators more prudent. They employed spies to deceive the spies, and disguise and deception were becoming general, to an extent it is scarcely possible to imagine.

In the metropolis disturbances took place, and the recognition of any of the foreigners, male or female who were known to possess the King's

favour, was the signal for insult, abuse, and riot. Caricatures, epigrams, satires, and every kind of squib, directed against the obnoxious Hanoverians, were frequently published and eagerly bought. The tone of popular opinion was both loud and sharp, and many shrewd persons anticipated would soon burst forth into a chorus that would frighten the unpopular monarch back to his beloved electorate.

At this period rather late in the afternoon, an old lady was proceeding in a private sedan chair from Whitehall along King Street. Her two stalwart Irish chairmen were clothed in serviceable great coats, that allowed scarcely a part of the wearer to be seen but a pair of calves of dimensions only to be met with in people of their calling. Of the person they carried it was impossible to distinguish anything beyond the fact that she was in the dress of an elderly lady and it might be imagined from the direction in which she was being carried, that she was some pious old soul proceeding to hear afternoon service at Westminster Abbey.

Though there wanted but a few minutes to the time when service commenced, and the chairmen were evidently the most skilful of their class,

seemed as though the good lady would not be allowed to reach the abbey as soon as she desired. In advance could distinctly be heard a confused shout of groans and cries, and other signs of a popular hubbub; and at no great distance a riotous mob was approaching, exhibiting every sign of being in a most mob-like humour.

“Arrah, Dan!” exclaimed the leading chairman, stopping and turning to his fellow labourer. “By the powers of Moll Kelly, here’s as fine a shindy going on forenenst us, as ever you set eyes on.”

“More power to your elbow!” replied the other, in a half joyful, half sorrowful tone. “And isn’t it ourselves now, that’s two misfortunite craters, to be afther coming this way this blessed minute, of all the days of the week, jist when there’s sich a beautiful skrimmage as is coming down upon us, as will get the old lady, and the chair, and all of us smashed into smithereens, before we can say Jack Robinson.”

Here the old lady whom they were bearing, and on whom their conversation had not been lost, put her head outside the window above the door. Her face was covered with a mask,

so that it was impossible to say how old was, or what she was like.

“Chairman !” she cried.

“Och, the blazes ?” exclaimed the first speaker with much emphasis, as he quietly put down his burthen, and began to watch with no small interest the doings of the approaching crowd. “It’s a beautiful row, sure enough, honey ! it’s meself that would like to be in the thick of it with a nate bit of a stick, for the sake of a little diversion.”

“Chairman !—chairman !” cried the old lady with more energy, as she stretched her head against the pane of the window as far as she could.

“That’s thrue for you, Paddy, my boy, niver a bit of a lie,” added his companion ; “if it wasn’t for the old lady that’s inside, should I be glad to try my luck with you at that season for the honour of ould Ireland.”

“Chairman !—chairman !” shouted their son, with a somewhat frightened burthen, having many reasons for desiring to be as far from a popular tumult as possible, and beginning to entertain some fears that she should not only get into the midst of the approaching mob, but would be abandoned.

by her bearers, from their inability to refrain from joining in any row that might be going on in their neighbourhood. The dreadful thought of the danger in which she was placed seemed to give the old lady additional strength to arrest the attention of the two Irishmen,—now so absorbed in the stirring scene before them, as to have become as completely forgetful of their burthen, as though they had never seen her.

“Faix, there at it in right airnest!” exclaimed Pat, with evident delight. “I’ll go bail, I’ll see the fun, any how.”

“Chairman!” screamed the poor old lady, stretching out her neck so as almost to protrude her body out of the sedan-chair.

“Och! blood and ouns, Dan, here’s the queer ould soul calling!” cried Paddy, in an undertone. “What is it, my Lady?” he added, briskly, putting his hand to a straggling lock of hair that hung over his forehead.

“Take me away!—Take me away, this minute! I must be carried out of the way of that mob. Bear me out of this riotous street without a moment’s delay.”

“Oh yes, my Lady;—in a brace o’ shakes, my

his head, as he answered, "Please your honorable Ladyship, they've got so close upon the plane impossible to get out of the way before they've passed us. Wouldn't it please my Lady, to stand on this elegant dais until the skirmish has gone by, and left clear."

"No; I insist upon being immediately out of the way of this horrid mob!" cried the inmate of the sedan, in a commanding voice.

But the chairmen either did not care for her commands, or were determined to see the stirring scene that was approaching, and went so slowly to work in raising their poles that the crowd had approached alarming close.

"Chairman!" again called out the old woman in accents of alarm, seeing that if the men refused to do her bidding, they were likely to

“ I’ll give you a crown a piece if you’ll prevent any rude fellow poking his head into the sedan. And do you hear, chairman ?”

“ Every word, my Lady.”

“ I’ll give you a guinea a-piece, if you’ll stand before the door, and prevent the mob pressing upon me ;—and don’t leave the spot till the way is clear to proceed.”

“ Long life to your Ladyship !. Dan and I’ll stand like two statutes, my Lady ; and if any rascalion shews so much as his ugly nose too near your Ladyship, by this and by that, we’ll ate him without salt.”

In a very brief space of time the chair was snugly placed on the doorstep, above the pavement ; its inmate sat back as much out of sight as possible, and the two stout Irishmen took up their positions before the door, effectually screening her from observation, whilst their Herculean proportions made them an excellent defence, should an attack be attempted.

These arrangements had just been completed, when the mob rushed forward, yelling, and shouting, and groaning, in a most horrible chorus. It was observed that a considerable part of this riotous assemblage wore the habit of citizens, or

respectable artizans, yet were equally active and vociferous with the ragged and vagabond portion.

What was the cause of all this uproar, could not be ascertained; but in the thickest part of the mob a chariot was seen—one of those curious vehicles with the body placed far back. The coachman, wearing a very handsome livery, was whipping his horses in a vain attempt to escape from the tumult, while three tall footmen, equally well apparelled, hung like powdered and dressed up monkeys, behind.

The yells became deafening; the groans most horrible; and many insulting expressions were shouted by the mob. When the chariot came opposite to the doorstep, where the old lady and her champions had placed themselves, it was seen that a woman rode in the chariot. She sat back; but she was perfectly visible to all who could look into the carriage from an elevation; and a more disagreeable, repulsive looking object, it was scarcely possible to have imagined.

She had long passed her youth;—and it was equally plain she had long passed her beauty. Her features were large; her skin coarse and dark; her figure vulgar, and extremely corpulent.

In brief, a more bloated, ill-looking, clumsy-shaped woman, all London could not have produced : nevertheless, this was Madame Kielmansegge, the King's mistress.

"Down with the Hanoverian rats !" exclaimed one voice.

"Go back to your own beggarly country, you cursed old uglymug !" shouted a second.

"Arn't you ashamed, you unwholesome looking varmint, to be a King's conkyoubine, with such a precious ugly phiz as you've got !" cried a third.

"You abominable old sinner, you ! The devil would have fetched you long afore this, if you hadn't made him so plaguy sick when he first cotched sight of you, he hasn't been able to recover himself !" screamed a fourth.

It may be gathered from these complimentary speeches, that the opinions of George I. and of his subjects differed very considerably in their estimates of female beauty. Madame Kielmansegge, although she knew very little English, was perfectly satisfied that the addresses she had heard were not of the most flattering description. She felt a slight sense of alarm ; but she pos-

essed a degree of impudence worthy of her
ing, and fancied she could easily persuade
shouting and groaning mob, that she was a
more amiable being than they supposed
to be.

She called her courage to her aid, and pressed
her face right before the open window of
chariot. Whether the full sight of such pe-
attractions in a King's mistress, or her ap-
intention to address them, affected the mult-
cannot be satisfactorily ascertained; but
it is the general row subsided, and the
became silent. Now was the golden minute
thought; and she hastened to seize it.

"Goot beobles," she cried, in the most fr-
manner that can be conceived. "Mine
beobles, pelieve me, I come only for
goots!"

"Ay, and be d—d to you for a plun-
old hussey!" cried a ready wit close to her
riage window. "We know you have oot
our goods, and our chattels, too!"

This was the signal to renew the uproar,
recommenced with a shout of laughter; and
came an endless number of epithets, execr-

and admonitions, that would have made a pretty long lesson for her, had she attempted to get them by heart.

Madame Kielmansegge had sense enough to see that the King's subjects were not so easily gulled as the King. She cried to the coachman to drive as fast as he could, and threw herself back against the carriage. The coachman whipped his horses; the footmen clung like wild-cats to their places; shouts, groans, yells, dead cats, mud and rotten eggs, were hurled against the chariot in every direction; and so many missiles might, at least have been more than enough for those who were outside, had not the skilful Jehu succeeded in making an opening in the mob, and dashed at full speed out of King Street into the wider thoroughfare of Whitehall.

He then soon left the noisy mob too far behind, to have the slightest anxiety for the safety of his mistress; though it was evident, in the bespattered liveries of the servants, and mud-covered panels of the chariot, that they did not come out of the conflict unscathed.

All the while this hubbub was going on before her, the alarmed old lady in the sedan sat in a most uncomfortable state of anxiety. She was

fearful that the unruly mob would become troublesome to her; and notwithstanding her handsome offers, she was not without considerable apprehension her Irish chairmen would allow their national inclinations to join in a row going on before them, to overpower their desire to possess what had been promised them on the condition of their keeping themselves quiet. The liberality of this reward, proved that the person who offered it, was either in a great fright, or had powerful reasons for desiring to remain undisturbed and unknown.

To do them justice Dan and Paddy kept their posts as quietly as the most trust-worthy sentinels could have done; but, in the first place it should be known that the mob were too intent upon paying due honours to Madame Kielmansegge to heed the sedan or its inmate, and the next as soon as the Irishmen discovered there was no fighting going on, and all the rumpus was caused by a lot of people abusing one of the King's mistresses, they determined on doing their duty to "the queer ould soul" inside, with a fidelity worthy of the reward.

"Be the Piper that played before Moses, did you ever see the like of that, Dan?" exclaimed

Paddy to his comrade. "To hear the rumpus one would have thought all the shelaleghs in Connaught were playing the divil's march to purgatory. But they haven't the sinse, honey ! to get up a dacent fight, or they wouldn't be howling at that ill-looking baste in the carritch."

"Oh, it's a poor lot they are, Paddy," said the other in great disdain. "Shouldn't we be disgraced entirely, and deserve it too, had we ventured among such wake-spirited spalpeens. Bear a hand, jewel, now they've passed us, we'll 'arn the goulden guineas asily. I wouldn't give a pinch of salt for these English ; I'd bate 'em by handfulls, I would."

The mob had gone by, and the way appeared clear ; so the bearers took up the chair again much to the satisfaction of the old lady within, and receiving a brief direction from her, hastened from the door-step with the quick springy step peculiar to this class of people, and did not stop till they got close to Westminster Abbey. Here they put down the chair, and the lady got out, and bidding them take the chair away, and be back by a certain time, she walked towards the great door. No one was near enough to observe her, and she entered the sacred building. She could see a few

persons passing on before ; but instead of following them to where the service was going on, she turned sharply to the right, where there was a door in an archway, which being in shadow, might readily be passed unregarded by those who knew not its existence. She pushed the door, which was slightly open, and entering, closed it quietly and carefully.

After passing along a dim passage she came to a chamber, that had much the appearance of a buttery, or place connected with a kitchen. Here she went up two or three steps, and by another door found her way into a longer passage, in which were several doors. Of these she took no notice ; but as if she knew the place thoroughly, went on till she came to a handsome flight of stairs, that led to a green baized door. She opened it and went in — opened another door close to it, found herself in a handsome apartment covered with books, in which the Bishop of Rochester was seated at a table, his gouty leg supported on a stool, reading a large folio volume. She took off her mask as she entered, and disclosed the features of the Duchess of Marlborough.

The Bishop evidently expected her, for he exhibited no surprise at her appearance. He looked

a little more serious than usual, and appeared as though he had but lately left his bed-room, for he was in his dressing-gown and night-cap; a kind of dress that made him look a much less reverend personage, than when he wore his wig and clerical suit.

Her Grace entered, flushed either with excitement or exertion, and at once made for a chair close to the Bishop. She glanced at his uncanonical appearance, which seemed to shock her sense of propriety very much; and in her usual stiff and stately manner strode to a seat.

His Lordship put on a cheerful air on beholding her, and welcomed her in a manner half jocose, half gallant; but the solemn old lady was in no humour either for pleasantry or gallantry; and gravely acquainted him with her meeting the mob who were assailing "one of the foreign women;" and her fear of being discovered by some of the numerous spies she knew to be always watching her wherever she went. She drew a vivid picture of her alarm whilst the disturbance was going on before her, yet did not conceal the gratification she felt at the treatment "the good-for-nothing wretch" was receiving at the hands of an indignant people.

The Bishop expressed his concern for Grace's sufferings : but at the description of abuse lavished on the King's mistress by mob, he burst out into expressions of the highest satisfaction, mingled with undisguised mirth.

"A good sign—an excellent beginning. Nothing could be more encouraging to our cause," he exclaimed.

"What do you call *our* cause, my Lord?" inquired the Duchess, with a look full of reserve.

"Why what cause could be ours, but the cause of truth and legitimacy?" replied the Bishop.
"The cause of religion and honour, of virtue and worth—the cause of our amiable Prince driven from the throne of his ancestors, who is eager to maintain his rights, that he may be able to support the good and reward the deserving; in opposition to the cause of an alien, who, through the influence of an unprincipled faction, has usurped a crown he has disgraced; who supports only a pack of the most worthless of both sexes, who have left their own country to plunder this; and rewards only those who appear to be lost to all sense of honesty and self-respect."

The Duchess of Marlborough took snuff.

"I have had many opportunities of hearing

the virtues that so gloriously adorn a person over the water," resumed the prelate. "I have heard of his generosity, his respect for religion, and his integrity of character. I have had quite as many opportunities of hearing the vices of his rival, of seeing the insulting neglect with which he treats the most distinguished personages in the kingdom ; and the shameless manner in which he outrages common decency in his habitual disregard of all the respectable usages of society."

"You will please to remember, Bishop Atterbury," said the Duchess in her gravest tone of voice, and fixing her keen eyes upon his, "that his Grace the Duke of Marlborough is a subject of George I. King of England, and that I am his wife, and a subject of the same monarch."

The Bishop opened his eyes a little more than usual, as though wondering what was meant by such a speech, after the confidential communications that had passed between them, and the understanding he knew existed between "the person over the water" and the Duke of Marlborough.

"It is quite true, my Lord," she resumed, "that his Grace has the misfortune of seeing himself obliged to retire into the privacy of

country life, from not being so highly esteemed by his sovereign as his country, grateful for his eminent services, consider he deserves to be. But the Duke of Marlborough can afford to be satisfied with the voice of all Europe. It can be of little importance to him who are greatest Court, or by how many fools and knaves rewards are monopolised."

"Yes," said the prelate, a little mystified by these remarks. "The Duke of Marlborough is unquestionably the greatest hero of ancient and modern times:—the most skilful, the bravest, and the most successful: and the man above all others who has a claim upon the favours of the throne, of which he has long been so able a champion, and, were it filled by a monarch possessed of an hereditary right to dispense its honours and rewards, and capable of duly estimating the Duke's unparalleled public services, I have every reason to believe—nay, I can take upon myself to say that instead of his Grace being obliged to shut himself up at Woodstock, where he is like to remain unthought of and uncared for, he would stand at the right hand of his sovereign, the first in council as the first in war; and every distinction, ever gift his Majesty would have the power to bestow

would be lavished upon him with a prodigality that must exceed his most sanguine anticipations."

The Duchess of Marlborough again took snuff.

"It is not only in England," continued the prelate, "that the shameful manner in which the great Duke has been treated has excited indignation. The nations who witnessed his glorious career, can scarcely believe that so great a man as the conqueror of Blenheim, could submit to the humiliations that have been forced upon him."

"No, my Lord Bishop," said her Grace haughtily; "it is quite impossible that so illustrious a character as the Duke of Marlborough could be humiliated. Attempts may be made to put affronts upon him; but he knows his own high position too well to heed them."

"Just so," observed the Bishop; "but such affronts are not the less disgraceful for the magnanimity of the person against whom they are directed. At least, such I am aware is the feeling in the most renowned Court in Europe; and to such an extent does it influence a person over the water, that I can say with some confidence, that there is nothing the Duke could ask when that person is in a position to grant what his

friends may require of him, that there would be the slightest hesitation in his bestowing."

The Duchess of Marlborough was perfectly aware of what every word uttered by the Bishop meant, and had ventured at considerable risk to fulfil the appointment she had entered into for the express purpose of hearing the overtures that were to be made to her husband to join an extensive conspiracy, that had been organizing since the accession of George I., to assist the Pretender to invade the country and drive the Hanoverians out of it; but she was also aware that the Duke had received a great deal; and though he had no possible objection to receive a great deal more, she was not going to allow him to risk what he had got, unless it was quite clear that it would be extremely to his advantage in the end; and this she had the means of knowing was not to be looked for in the present conspiracy.

Her natural shrewdness, aided by her vast experience of Courts, had made her too skilful a diplomatist to commit herself or her husband in any way with the adherents of the Pretender. Notwithstanding the genuine disgust with which she regarded the disgraceful doings at St. James's, and

the equally genuine animosity she felt for every one connected with the Court who had been instrumental in depriving the Duke of the numerous valuable appointments he had held before her quarrel with Queen Anne on finding herself supplanted by Mrs. Masham; the Duchess feigned as perfect an indifference to the fair promises contained in the speeches of her companion, as if she did not understand a word of what had been said.

Her object was to learn whether anything new had transpired respecting the projected rebellion, that she might possess as accurate a knowledge as possible of the intentions of the son of King James, and the resources of himself and his friends, to allow her to form a correct judgment of their prospect of success. And this object she presently attempted to gain by some skilful manœuvres that brought the unsuspecting prelate gradually to unfold the whole conspiracy before her, with all its means, agents, plans, and proceedings.

To gain so powerful an adherent as the Duke of Marlborough, was worth, the Bishop thought, a good deal of risk; and as the Duchess appeared more interested the more she learned of his important secrets, he proceeded with increased con-

fidence to place before her his correspondence, to explain the cypher, and to give her the fullest information respecting every person who had joined the conspirators, or were about to join them.

Nothing could exceed the care with which the Duchess endeavoured to make herself mistress of such a business in all its details; she gave an earnestness to her attention that much gratified her companion, and he did not scruple to answer her questions when he found her so deeply interested in the intelligence he laid before her.

The Duchess at last got from him all she wanted to know. There were no more questions to ask, there were no more answers to give. Her great penetration enabled her to see the exact character, and form an estimate of the true value of all the plans and promises, and expectations, her companion had detailed to her; and her line of conduct was very soon decided on.

The Duchess of Marlborough took snuff once more; and opened her box, extracted the powder and applied it to her nostrils with more than ordinary deliberation. There was a pause. The Bishop expected his visitor to speak, but his visi-

tor seemed in no hurry to do so. She sat with her sharp eyes fixed upon his with an expression he could not quite understand, and he did not at all like.

“Well what does your Grace think of our affairs?” at last inquired the prelate.

“Very badly, Bishop Atterbury,” replied the lady, as coolly as possible.

“Why, God bless my soul, Madam, you astonish me!” cried the Bishop, expressing a surprise he was not without feeling. “The cause wears the most favourable aspect; its supporters are numerous and powerful; a decisive movement is about to take place which cannot fail of success.”

“Indeed!” observed the Duchess in a tone of incredulity that grated terribly on the right reverend gentleman’s ears.

“Surely, under such circumstances,” added he, and not without an anxiety he could not conceal, “surely we may count on such important additions to our ranks as the Duke and yourself?”

“The Duke of Marlborough would be a great fool were he to think of joining you,” replied the lady very quietly; and added in a more impressive manner, “and I should be a greater fool were I to let him.”

“Why d—— it madam, I havn’t been betray the Prince’s secrets to a spy?” exclaimed Bishop, starting up in a rage, and looking very red in the face; for unhappily the worthy Bishop not only could throw himself into a passion, could look very red in the face, but could at such moments rap out an oath, which was still more canonical.

“No, Bishop Atterbury, you havn’t been doing anything of the kind,” answered the Duchess without moving a muscle of her countenance, ‘I came here for a very different purpose than to play the part of a spy; though I must say, my Lord that you make a bad conspirator, as I much fear you will yourself discover some of these days.”

“Pray what the devil did you come for?” inquired the prelate in what was decidedly a fiercer tone and expression.

“I came, Bishop Atterbury,” drily answered the old lady, leaning forward over the table and gazing on him steadily, “to warn you that Sir Robert Walpole is in possession of all the most important features of the conspiracy in which you are engaged.”

The poor Bishop at this intelligence fell back on his chair as if he had been shot, and his countenance

nance suddenly became as pale as it had formerly been rubicund.

The Duchess continued her gaze, but without betraying a particle of sympathy.

At this moment both were startled by a loud knocking at the door. In the excited state of mind in which the Bishop then was, the disturbance could seem nothing but a summons to surrender himself into the custody of the Lieutenant of the Tower ; and he made a desperate grasp at the papers on the table which were such indisputable evidence against him. The Duchess was not without apprehension, but her anxiety was far less violent than that of her companion.

The knocking was repeated more loudly, accompanied by some one calling on the Bishop. On recognizing the voice, the good prelate took a long breath, and hurriedly saying there was nothing to fear, and that he must leave her for a few minutes, he shuffled towards a door opposite to that by which the Duchess had entered, opened it, and disappeared, closing the door after him.

The Duchess of Marlborough was somewhat surprised at this mysterious movement ; and not being able to explain it to her satisfaction, was debating in her mind whether it would not

be most prudent for her to take advantage of the opportunity and make her escape ; but before she could bring herself to act upon such a suggestion, the door again opened, and Bishop Atterbury made his appearance, looking more excited than ever.

“The most extraordinary thing has happened,” said he as he approached the table “but I wonder very much how it was, I never before heard of such an intention. A plan has been on foot some time to assassinate the Elector of Hanover, and the person who has taken this perilous task upon himself, every day takes the sacrament from a non-juring priest, the better to strengthen his resolution, as he considers it, to destroy a tyrant who is a disgrace to the land he misgoverns. This is a wonderful proof of the public animosity. A sovereign exciting so powerful a feeling must not expect to stand against it.”

“Very true, my Lord,” replied her Grace, having recourse to her snuff, in her usual methodical manner. “But you do not appear to be aware, Bishop Atterbury, that the intended assassin has this morning been taken into custody, and will be hanged as assuredly as he has a head on his shoulders.”

“That is quite unknown to me !” exclaimed the Bishop, apparently astounded by the extent of his companion’s information.

“I cannot, with safety to myself, prolong this interview,” said the stately old lady rising from her seat. “I came to warn you. The Government are in considerable peril, but are well aware of it. Most of the conspirators are known. I recommend you strongly to be prudent ; for be assured that you are in no slight danger. What you have told me is quite safe with me ; but you cannot be too cautious in making such confidences. Good day, my Lord Bishop.”

And without another word, the Duchess glided out of the apartment, leaving the worthy prelate as completely bewildered by the startling news she had announced to him, as any Bishop ever was in his life.

END OF VOL. I.

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MAIDS OF HONOUR:

A TALE

OF

THE COURT OF GEORGE I.

"One thing I have got by the long time I have been here, which is, the being more sensible than ever I was of my happiness in being *Maid of Honour*: I wont say 'God preserve me so,' neither; that would not be so well."—SUFFOLK CORRESPONDENCE.

IN THREE VOLS.

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MAIDS OF HONOUR.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEAUTIES AT COURT.

God prosper long our noble King,
His Turks and Germans all.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

It was an eventful day to the youthful scholars of the estimable Penelope Stiffandstern that was to be distinguished by their presentation at Court. Intense as had been the excitement produced by their discovery of the mysterious letter which had led to their joint promenade of Ham Walk, the intimation that they were on the same day and at the same hour to be introduced to the Royal Family, created a still greater sensation.

The communication from their unknown respondent, as we have shown, each felt herself obliged by inclination or necessity to keep to herself; and the brief interval that elapsed between its receipt and her proceeding to fulfil its injunctions, was not favourable to its producing very lasting impression on either. But the anticipated visit to St. James's was a matter of grossing interest; a matter on which the fortunes of the fair schoolfellows depended.

The daughter of the Brigadier was perhaps elated than any of her companions; notwithstanding her father had in a very fatherly lecture disclosed to her the glorious prospect which introduction at Court opened to her; and the Duchess of Marlborough had called expressly to endeavour to furnish her pretty little head with as much worldly wisdom as would insure her retaining every possible advantage from so great honour.

It so happened, however, that there was a simplicity in the nature of Mary Lepel so entirely unselfish, that the paternal lecture and even worldly wisdom of the great Duchess failed to corrupt it. She might see in her appearance at St. James's an opening to more splendid scenes than

she knew anything about, save through the medium of her favourite romances ; but she thought little of the schemes and manœuvres which were necessary for her successful career in such a place. If imagination did assist her, it was with visions of adventure at least as bright as those that form the staple of "*Le Grand Cyrus*."

The daughter of Lord Bellenden was in raptures. All the resources of her French education would now have an appropriate field for their display ; and she lost no opportunity for rehearsing each irresistible gesture and every impressive expression that were to be brought into requisition for fascinating every one, from the King on the throne to the yeoman at the doors. She let her youthful friends know that the golden days of her Parisian conquests were about to return with increased brilliancy, and that she did not intend to be satisfied till she had brought to her feet at least double the number of adorers of every description that had sighed there in vain during her memorable residence in the delightful French metropolis.

Sophy Howe did not talk so much, but she thought a good deal on the subject. She wondered whether she should meet among the cour-

tiers any man likely to create in her heart the exquisite feelings which she had heard designated by the name of love—a real passion such should ingross all her womanly sympathies. Under this head she did not class the frivolous attachments Mary Bellenden regarded as conquests for Sophy Howe was a creature of warm generous impulses—much too susceptible much too imprudent for her own peace.

Fanny Meadows neither talked much nor thought much. In fact, she affected great indifference about going to Court, and was not quite satisfied it was a creditable place; nevertheless Fanny Meadows partook largely of the general excitement, and was extremely curious to know who she was likely to meet, and what sort of people they were.

But the grand subject of debate among the aspirants for Court favour was the dress they ought to appear in; and in the chamber so long devoted to their mutual confidences, long and animated were the discussions respecting the materials, colours and styles they should each adopt. Some awkward irregularities might have occurred had they not agreed to ask counsel from so distinguished a guide in dress as Lady Wort

Montagu, by whose knowledge and taste they were at last put in the way of appearing according to Court rules.

There happened just then to be no less stir in St. James's than there was at Petersham Manor. The important discovery that had been made respecting the King's intended assassination had excited the whole establishment; and the ministers had been indefatigable, not only in tracing this conspiracy, but in endeavouring to defeat the great movement with which the kingdom was threatened by the friends of the Pretender.

The King was extremely disturbed—rarely allowed the attendance upon him of any one except his two Turkish guards, servants, and gossips. The accounts he received from his ministers were of a most unpleasant nature. He loved to be left undisturbed; yet when alone he was haunted by the pallid countenance we have elsewhere noticed, which intruded upon him in the council chamber, in the apartments of his mistress, and even in the saloons of the palace when he was surrounded by company.

His Majesty was at this particular period far from being in an amiable mood. He was incensed against his ministers; he was terribly

bitter against his son ; he was excessively vexed with those of his English subjects who were desirous of disclaiming his authority. If he had not been perfectly satisfied that, notwithstanding the extraordinary plucking the country had undergone since his arrival, it would bear a great deal more, he would have magnanimously turned his back upon it, and set sail for Hanover. But his ambition to be at the head of one of the great powers of Europe was much stronger than his affection for his humble electorate ; therefore his principal minister found no difficulty in prevailing upon him to hold a levée to receive the nobility and gentry desirous of making a demonstration of their loyalty to the reigning family.

Great preparations were made to render the courtly ceremony as imposing as possible ; Sir Robert Walpole was extremely pressing upon all the supporters of his administration to be present, and to attend. It was a critical period. The country was on the eve of a rebellion, and upon the friends of order and good government were seen round the throne, the kingdom was in peril. The palace was made to bear its most royal aspect, and all its inmates were to make as great a display of courtly finery as court etiquette allowed.

The fame of these preparations and the significance of the minister's intimations filled St. James's Street with sedans; indeed so strong a muster was there of these convenient machines, that the special constables and the grenadiers on guard in their sugar-loaf caps and black gaiters, had no slight difficulty in keeping order amongst the noisy chairmen.

The noblemen and gentlemen having escaped from their vehicles with as little damage as possible to their carefully dressed perriwigs, their ample skirts, their gaudy vests, their projecting swords, and their delicate silk stockings—had on making good their entrance at St. James's to force their way up the grand staircase of the palace, ordered and looked after by the proper officers of the household in all the pomp of embroidery and majesty of office.

There thronged country gentlemen of a thousand a year, and wealthy citizens ten times as rich; lord lieutenants of counties, admirals, generals, peers and parliament men, place-hunters, pensioners, bishops, captains and physicians; judges, mayors and corporations, and a whole Noah's ark of curious animals not so easy to classify, unless they were placed as a distinct

body, who sought the interior of St. James's in the full conviction that they were planting their feet on the first spoke of the ladder that should lead them to wealth and distinction.

If it was not very clear what they came for, there could be no question that they assisted materially in thronging the stairs. Indeed, they greatly helped to form such a highly respectable assemblage of the higher classes of England, as it was expected would create a powerful influence in favour of the unpopular sovereign.

During the period of waiting their reception many of the groups managed to entertain themselves with a little confidential conversation. The subject, notwithstanding the place in which the speakers were, was generally the proceedings of the Pretender; and many were heard to speak very emphatically as to what they intended doing in favour of their honoured sovereign, in case there should be any contest; but of the most confident of these speakers, it so happened there was more than one who was suspected of being in communication with the son of King James, and who had voluntarily come to Court for the express purpose of removing these suspicions.

In the throne room a magnificent scene pre-

sented itself. There was a grand muster of state officials in all their golden trappings : ribbons and stars were in great abundance ; it was altogether a very fine display. The most prominent figure in that splendid chamber was that of the King ; but he seemed to be prominent from the deficiency in his own person of that grandeur which was so ostentatiously put forth by the company. Save the star and George on his breast, and the garter at his knee, the diamond buckles, and the broad ribbon across his chest, no addition seemed to have been made to the snuff-coloured suit in which the reader first beheld him. Nor, after all the care of his principal minister, could his Majesty be persuaded to infuse into his countenance an expression suited to the occasion.

King George stood rather awkwardly before the gorgeous seat that gave its imposing name to the apartment. On his right hand was Sir Robert Walpole, who was placed there with two objects of great political importance : in the first place he was to keep the King in good humour, and in the second, to be ready to give his assistance in making his Majesty understand who was the person presented to him, and what he ought to say. Now this happened to be a much more difficult matter

than the reader is likely to anticipate, for more reasons than one. The first of these, however, happened to be, that his Majesty did not understand a word of English ; and the loyal gentleman who aspired to the honour of presentation, knew just as little of German. This ignorance, unfortunately was shared by the prime minister.

It was awkward enough that the individual who took upon himself the character of interpreter could not pronounce a sentence in the language of one of the two parties ; nay, the King could converse in French, with which his minister however, was not sufficiently familiar to fulfill the task he had taken upon himself. The usefulness of Sir Robert Walpole in such a position might have been called in question, had he not fortunately discovered that his royal master remembered sufficient Latin to make himself understood ; and as the minister happened to be equally accomplished in this respect, it was expected that the business of the day might go on satisfactorily.

A little way back from the throne stood a group of ministers, lords in waiting, gold sticks, and similar personages, looking dignified and stately, and with a full sense of their own importance.

As the company were admitted, the name of the individual to be presented with that of the nobleman or gentleman under whose auspices he sought such a distinction, having been given to the proper official, they, in their turn, were ushered with all due solemnity and respect to the throne; their names and titles announced, and Sir Robert having made the King aware of who was before him, the royal hand was stretched out as the loyal subject respectfully kneeled and saluted it, and a few gracious words addressed, which lost nothing, and usually gained a great deal in the translation. The parties then moved off to make way for fresh comers.

The proceedings in this manner had been going on as smoothly as the best friends of the House of Hanover could desire; many of his subjects leaving the chamber with a much higher opinion of their sovereign than they had entertained before they entered it. The change arose entirely from some highly gratifying speech which they had been led to suppose the King had addressed to them, yet of which his Majesty unfortunately, was perfectly innocent. Where he knew anything of the parties, he would detain them, and ask questions on matters in which they were inte-

rested; all which, amplified and much improved by the wonderful skill and tact of the minister, did wonders both for the King and for his government.

But in most instances he knew nothing of the persons before him, and cared less, and seemed inclined to get rid of them as quickly as possible, usually doing so with some remark as rude as it was impolitic. Nevertheless, the sagacious minister, confident he could not be discovered by either, metamorphosed the most discourteous reception into words of honied flattery that made many a secret rebel a good subject for life.

In this way had passed the throne a long train of courtiers of all professions—some known as such, others desirous of being so known—with the leading members of both houses of Parliament—Whigs and Tories being equally prudent in exhibiting their loyalty. Some came to congratulate the King on his recent escape from assassination, others to assure him of their devotion in these troublesome times: some to return thanks for an appointment; others in hopes of getting one; and a great number to prove to the minister how ready they were to serve him in any

way not likely to put them to any great inconvenience.

Among the announcements was "the Lord Mayor;" and there advanced towards the King a short, red faced, corpulent man, in all the dignity of robes, gold chain, and other civic insignia, under which he waddled and puffed as though such honours were more than he could carry.

"Heaven and earth, what have we here!" exclaimed the monarch in his German Latinity, "what strange monster is this? Is there a she animal of the same species I wonder? Surely my dominions in England may boast of wonderful productions!"

"His Majesty," said the prime minister, as the Lord Mayor knelt down to pay the customary mark of homage, "has commissioned me to express the extreme gratification he experiences at seeing the chief magistrate of the first city in the British Empire, and the head of the most enlightened corporation in the world; and begs to ask after the health of the Lady Mayoress."

"Bless my heart, Sir Robert, does he?" cried his Lordship with difficulty recovering his perpendicular. "I'm mightily beholden to his Majesty; very much beholden indeed. Please to

and the King with my humble duty, my wife and daughter. She has sadly studied your soul, and I am sure it is not without purpose."

"What does the put-bellied rhinoceros? What?" repeated the King eagerly; staring the little ambassador as if he scarcely thought him human.

"His grace, please your Majesty," replied the ambassador in the same high-sounding Roman phraseology, "that the important city and corporation of London, of which he is the Lord Mayor and governor, are devoted to the interests of your Majesty, and are ready to assist to the extent of their wealth in supporting the right of the House of Hanover against the machinations of any of your Majesty's enemies."

"All that is as it should be," cried the monarch trying to look more gracious; "but if the good citizens of London are like their Lord Mayor, surely I may consider myself King of the oddest-looking subjects under the sun."

"The King commands me to express to the corporation and citizens of London," added Robert, with a most edifying gravity, "that he fully appreciates their loyalty and zeal, and will do his utmost to advance the prosperity

their city and prove his respect for its institutions."

"My humble duty to the King, Sir Robert," said the Lord Mayor, his honest rosy face glowing with pleasure, "and tell his Majesty if I catch any of his enemies in the city, I'll make uncommon short work of them." And away waddled his worship, the most loyal of citizens; wondering how people could think of traducing or ridiculing so excellent a Monarch.

The next who presented himself before his sovereign was a dignitary of the church: thin, tall, stiff, severe, almost savage in aspect, which a considerable obliquity of vision did not improve; to this blemish was added the infirmity of deafness which he disclosed by speaking in the tones of a town-crier.

"Surely this is some half-starved raven!" exclaimed the King, scanning the gaunt figure of the new comer; "he looks as if he could pick a bone with anybody, and as though it would be a charity to give him one."

"His Majesty commands me to inform you, Dr. Stifftext," commenced the minister in a high voice, "that he feels the most profound respect for your extraordinary learning; and that in his

estimation your last volume of sermons proves that you are the chief pillar of the establishment, and the brightest ornament of his reign."

"May the Lord grant the King a long life!" replied the prelate with a voice that might have been heard in the ante-chamber. "I am but a humble instrument, a poor creature of clay; but the church I serve deserves my best exertions, and I am proud they have met with his Majesty's approbation." The rigid and very upright pillar of the church stalked away with a far more favourable opinion of the religious principles of his sovereign than he had entertained on entering the palace.

"What monkey is this, Walpole," cried the King as the somewhat foppishly clad, yet elegant figure of the Brigadier General Lepel moved towards his sovereign with all the grace of a practised courtier, "An old monkey too, by all that's abominable! How," added he, "he skips along looking as pleased as if he were going to a wedding. Why that wig of his must be worth a prodigious deal more than the head it covers: and the gay coat he has on, he could never earn were he to labour till dooms-day."

"Please your Majesty," said the minister in

peculiarly earnest tone, "I have the honour of presenting to you that brave and skilful officer Brigadier General Lepel, who performed such essential service to your Majesty by securing his regiment to the Hanoverian succession, at the demise of your illustrious predecessor. Your Majesty has not a more trustworthy nor a more efficient officer in your army."

"Oh, ah! indeed!" exclaimed King George, who was always inclined to notice favourably any of the officers who had shewed zeal or ability in his service. "Brigadier Lepel, eh! Brave soldier is he? First time the lion was ever seen in the monkey's skin."

"I am commanded by his most gracious Majesty," gravely commenced the skilful interpreter, as the old beau was gracefully bending to his sovereign, "to express his very sincere pleasure at beholding an officer of such distinction as Brigadier General Lepel; and to state that he will not lose sight of your claims to his consideration, and will on the first favourable opportunity place you in a position where your zeal, your skill, and your valour may have a proper field for their display."

"I humbly return his Majesty my most grateful

thanks for so delightful a proof of his royal kindness and condescension," answered the Brigadier with a courtier's action and delivery ; " believe me, I shall be but too proud to lay down my life in the King's service."

" Please your Majesty," said Sir Robert, " the Brigadier is ready to expend his whole fortune if necessary in supporting the Protestant succession, and would readily raise a regiment of a thousand men at his own expense to lead against your Majesty's enemies."

" A brave man ! a very brave man !" cried the monarch in evident delight. " Has he any sons in the army ?"

" He has only one child, please your Majesty," answered the minister, who was well acquainted with the Brigadier and his wishes, " and that child, unfortunately for your Majesty's service is a daughter ; but I know from good authority that the young lady is extremely beautiful and remarkably accomplished, and would undoubtedly be considered a great ornament to the Court."

" Oh a daughter ; bah !" cried the monarch peevishly, " I don't want any more women. The Schulenburg and the Kielmansegge satisfy me ;" then as if feeling the propriety of doing something

to shew his sense of the Brigadier's extraordinary loyalty, added, "tell him to bring his daughter to my evening parties: must do something to encourage such a man; but I could never have supposed so good an officer could become so great a puppy."

Brigadier General Lepel was extremely delighted when he heard the royal commands, divested of course of the opinions with which they had been accompanied. He had scarcely removed himself from the presence when it became apparent that something extraordinary was going on at the other end of the chamber, for there was a great stir, and all were looking and as much as they dared were crowding in one direction. The minister was engaged in a manner very similar to the scene just described, in presenting General Howe, who seemed better to satisfy the King's ideas of what a General ought to be; and the trio were too much intent on their own business to pay attention to other matters.

It appeared that this sensation was caused by the entrance of the Princess of Wales, accompanied by four of the most lovely creatures, that, according to the oldest courtiers, had ever been seen within the walls of St. James's. All looked

in astonishment : such angelic faces, such site forms, decked with such admirable they could not sufficiently admire. The tures seemed to float before them as the c of a dream : they could scarcely believe th place where ugliness had established its quarters, it was possible the incomparable ties in the train of the Princess could have tured to intrude.

After the Princess and her ladies, at so tance, there followed the Prince and several tlemen. His Royal Highness was striving on a becoming gravity, but it was evident in particular good humour, for his dull ey tened with pleasure, and his heavy mouth most agreeable smile. He looked toward young ladies who were attracting every attention ; and then he turned and looked at astonished faces of the gazers, and it was c the strongest control over his feelings th could refrain from bursting out into a parox hearty laughter, such as must have discom the gravity of the whole courtly assembly.

The Princess proceeded towards the t every one respectfully making way for her wondering where she could have found the

tiful creatures by whom she was followed ; and it was not till she had closely approached her Royal father-in-law, that by the disappearance of the old General he was made aware of her presence. His son's consort was much more favourably regarded by him than his son, and on her kneeling to kiss his hand, the King affectionately raised her from the ground and kissed her forehead. Then he asked kindly after her health, and seemed inclined to be extremely gracious and pleasant.

"May I count on your Majesty's goodness so far as to request a favour?" inquired the Princess in her own language.

"Favour!" exclaimed the King, "every one asks favours except you, Princess, and many are vastly attentive that way. But what is it you want ; you don't desire to be made Archbishop, I hope, or Commander-in-Chief!"

"No, please your Majesty," answered the Princess, "I have neither the ability necessary for such distinctions, nor am I likely to ask any office, merely to obtain the emoluments derived from it. In the first place, I wish to present to your Majesty certain young friends of mine, who wish to be allowed to pay their respects to their sovereign."

"Oh yes, certainly, there can be no objection,

if they have not committed themselves against me in any way," said the monarch.

"I will answer for their loyalty," observed the Princess gravely; then with equal grace and sincerity of manner, she presented one after the other, the four lovely pupils of the peerless Penelope Stiff-andstern, in all the pride of their blushing beauty set off by court robes of the most admirable fashion.

Not one of the fair friends but felt considerable trepidation in the presence of that sovereign of whom they had heard so much; and although the extreme kindness of the Princess of Wales had gone far towards making them feel at ease in a position so novel, they did not approach the King without some slight disquietude.

The King was taken by surprise, when for the first time he noticed his daughter-in-law's associates. Dull as he was, and insensible as he appeared, he could still feel a sense of the beautiful. As each approached him, he stared with wonder not unmixed with pleasure, and went through the customary ceremony as the name was mentioned to him, in a manner differing widely from his usual apathy, not forgetting to kiss his beautiful subjects on the cheek as he raised them when they sought to kneel before him.

In this way the cold and listless Fanny Meadows had passed the throne. She looked very lovely; but not more animated than a statue. Then followed the warm, and glowing Sophy Howe, on whose more attractive countenance the King looked as though he wished he had been thirty years younger. She was succeeded by Mary Bellenden, with her Parisian graces in full play, on whom he gazed with more curiosity than wonder; but directly the winning, innocent graces of Mary Lepel met his gaze, the expression of quiet admiration that had lit up his stolid countenance, changed into one of extreme astonishment, not unmingled with fear.

“God of Heaven—how marvellous a likeness!” he exclaimed in German, in the excitement of the moment, forgetting where he was; and he drew the trembling, blushing beauty towards him, gazing into her eyes as though there was some magic in them. This strange movement had been caused by one of those reminiscences from the mysterious and guilty Past, which so often troubled his waking thoughts; no matter where he was, or in what way engaged. The King beheld in the lustrous eyes of the Brigadier’s daughter those wells of unutterable affection

from which his spirit, in happier times, had drawn its first draught of happiness.

"Wonderful!—wonderful!" he cried, clasping his hands, and fixing a vacant stare on the creature before him.

"Let me present to your Majesty," said the Princess, with a woman's tact desirous of moving the King's evident agitation, by diverting the unpleasant thoughts with which he had been visited, "Mary, the only child of Brigadier General Lepel; and I can safely add, that your Majesty will find the daughter as admirable a subject, as you must be aware the father is an excellent officer."

"Oh—ah—yes!" exclaimed the King, somewhat bewildered. "General Lepel; yes, he is a good officer:—has raised a regiment. A very good officer — a good officer. And this charming maiden is his daughter?" The King again fixedly; but not unkindly. "I have told him to bring her to my evening parties. You bring them all."

"And now for my favour, please your Majesty," said the Princess, with an arch-smile.

"Oh, yes!—what is it, Princess?"

"granted it long ago!" The King added

out taking off his eyes from the youthful beauty.

“No, please your Majesty, for I have not yet mentioned it,” said his daughter-in-law. “I crave your Majesty’s sanction to my having these young ladies enrolled amongst my immediate attendants.”

“There can be no objection,” replied the monarch, who in his heart took a particular pleasure in such an arrangement. “They are very proper appointments. All good families ; all loyal, all apparently well-bred. I am pleased you should ask what must be so readily granted. But remember,” he added eagerly, “you are commanded to bring them as your personal attendants to my evening parties.”

“They shall not fail to attend, when it meets your royal wishes,” answered the Princess ; and then, with another affectionate salute to the King, and a courteous recognition to the minister, that amiable lady and her lovely associates passed from before the throne. As Mary Lepel departed, the King looked after her, and sighed. All at once his features underwent a sudden and startling change of expression, as his eyes were directed towards the next person who approached.

From the look of remorse and melancholy those features had worn a moment since, they passed to anger not unmixed with hatred.

"Heaven and earth, Walpole, here comes that rascal of a son of mine!" he exclaimed, in no slight excitement.

"I implore your Majesty to be calm," whispered the anxious minister. "Remember how many eyes are upon you, and all the mischief any public explosion of your Majesty's anger towards the heir apparent might cause," added Sir Robert, urgently.

It was curious to mark the different manner in which the King chose to treat his son, and his daughter-in-law. The Prince came forward carelessly, looking about him as if his thoughts were extremely amused, and as though he did not know, or would not know that he was so near the King. He sauntered up to the throne, and went through the usual ceremony with less appearance of interest than he would have shewn had his Majesty been a perfect stranger. The King put out his hand; but he looked as if he longed to use it against his son's ears. His features were very rarely agreeable; but during the few minutes the Prince was before him, the expression they wore was most forbidding.

That day was a remarkable day at St. James's. It caused a world of gossip and conjecture. The wonderful graciousness of the King's demeanour, and the very kind language he employed; the appearance of the four beauties in the train of the Princess of Wales, and the strange reception the King gave his son, seemed to have set all the tongues in London and Middlesex in such a full tide of gossip as no event had ever produced before. But the new Court Beauties had by far the most important share of the conversation, and the vainest of them ought to have been satisfied with the extraordinary sensation she had made.

CHAPTER II.

KING'S MISTRESSES.

Sufficient wrecks appear each day,
And yet fresh fools are cast away :
Ere well the bubbled can turn round,
Their painted vessel runs aground.

MATTHEW GIL

THE first appearance of the four fair fellows at the Court of St. James's, not only came the theme of town gossips, town wit and town gallants, but produced as extraordinary an effect within the palace as without. From the elegant Lord Chamberlain even to the stouthearted beef-eaters, comments and speculations in great number were in rapid creation and circulation.

Mahomet and Mustapha were completely of the opinion that a small detachment of the angels had escaped from Paradise ; the lords in w

the equerries, the pages, the gentlemen pensioners, and other royal attendants, if not exactly of this way of thinking, were impressed with the conviction that they were more likely to create a Paradise than to have abandoned one. The gold stick was in a fever of admiration; the exon in an ecstasy of astonishment; and from the attics to the scullery scarcely anything for the next four-and-twenty hours was said, done, or thought of, that did not relate in some measure to these beautiful strangers.

But though in every part of the royal edifice this excitement prevailed, there was one portion of the palace where it exhibited very extraordinary features: this portion was known as the apartments of the King's mistresses. There the effect produced was as deep as it was strange. We must take the liberty of transporting the reader to the ordinary sitting room of these royal favourites. It was a square chamber of handsome proportions, and containing much costly furniture; but there was a want of neatness and of harmony in the arrangement and choice of decoration, that proved the absence both of taste and order in the inmates. These consisted of three females.

The first was standing, occasionally stalk backwards and forwards with impatient gestulations. She was tall and thin, in a rich dress that fitted her badly and became her worse; what could have become a face and figure repulsive? She looked more like the mummy of a grenadier put into petticoats, than any thing else. A dried up, wrinkled face, coarsely rouged, a sharp nose and sharper chin; thin, almost colourless lips and dull-grey eyes, in which the prevailing expression was hypocrisy, although the barber and milliner did their best, were not likely to do much credit to their skill; and as to her form, there was more symmetry in a pitchfork than could have been found in her limbs, when they were placed in the most favourable position; that face so withered and repulsive, and that tall and shapeless figure belonged to a King's favourite; they were the face and figure of the all powerful Mademoiselle Schulenburg, or as the wits of the town chose to nick-name her, of "The Black Pole." The sallow-faced girl sitting on a cushion was one of her daughters, though she passed for her niece.

The features of her other companion might have given the spectator the idea of the

moon with a swelled face—had that planet possessed a more florid complexion, with here and there such fiery excrescences as gross feeding and gross tippling are stated to produce. The physiognomy was certainly not characteristic of a Venus, though it might have passed for that deity's cook-maid; but monstrous as was her face, her figure, even as it filled the great chair in which she had deposited her ample proportions, was more monstrous still.

When she stood up she looked like a water-butt, with a woman's head above it, and a woman's dress over it: sitting down she appeared from her shoulders downwards an undistinguishable heap of feminine apparel that had been carelessly thrown over a huge trunk placed on the chair. Yet that face so well known by its brick-dust complexion and staring black eyes; and that figure that had already become a laughing stock to the good people of London, were the face and figure of no less a person than Madame Kielmansegge, another member of the Royal Harem—better known about town by the soubriquet of "The Elephant and Castle," whom we have already introduced as the heroine of a Westminster mob.

It did not appear that either of these important

personages were in any particular good humour. In fact, the Schulenburg looked both sour and solemn; and the features of the other favourite indicated a powerful mingling of fear and anger.

Whether to give her courage or to support her rage, we cannot pretend to say, she had provided herself at the table close to which she sat, with a large Dutch black bottle of Schiedam with the contents of which she seemed to be somewhat familiar.

“I did not think the King could have so far forgotten himself,” observed the thin lady in German, “as to take any notice of such forward chits. But to sanction their appointment, as Maids of Honour to the Princess is not to be endured.”

“It was very thoughtless of him, my dear,” said the other in the same language, in a melancholy tone; “but he certainly not only forgot himself, but what is more strange, he forgot us, who have done so much for him. I don’t like the look of it at all.”

“Nor I,” added the former impressively. “Something must be done or our influence is gone.”

“Yes, something must be done!” repeated the

fat favourite; "but what must it be, and how is it to be done? I know well enough how you and my aunt got rid of his wife, when she became troublesome; but unfortunately we are not now in Hanover; and here are four rivals to be disposed of instead of one."

"Yes, four," said the thin favourite; "but they are mere girls. I think they would not give us much trouble to remove them."

"If we were at the Herrenhausen instead of St Jamer's, that might be," replied the other sharply.

"There none could oppose us. None dared to interfere with our designs. Those were golden times for us poor women, laudibly intent on making our fortunes as rapidly as we could. But remember that these creatures who have dared to thrust themselves into the King's notice are taken by the hand by the Princess. We must be very cautious in our proceedings against them."

"We will be cautious, my beloved Kielmansegg," exclaimed the chief lady; "but Providence, who has hitherto been so good to us, will, I have no doubt, support us in this trying juncture. It is a great relief and an especial consolation," she added, turning up the whites or rather

the yellows of her eyes, "to be able to put one's trust in the promises held out to the worst of sinners. I go five times a day on Sundays to my chapel to hear these precious prospects put forth."

"Yes, dearest Schulenburg, your piety is very edifying," observed her companion, drily; "but that sort of thing is not to my taste. I would rather not have to go quite so far for my comfort. I dare say I'm a great deal more sinner than saint; but I will keep on as good terms with myself as I can. It is more agreeable than considering one's-self so very vile." The speaker here proved by the movement of her glass to her mouth, that she was inclined to practice what she preached.

"Ah! those strong waters!" exclaimed the thin favourite. "When will you think less of them and more of your immortal soul? I wish you would go with me to hear that shining vessel, the Reverend Dr. Stifftext."

"Bah!" said the fat favourite, "he is much too noisy a vessel for me. My black-bottle is more to my mind. Its doctrine I never dispute; and it holds forth only just as long as I require it. But if you are too much absorbed in your religious

views, I do not see how we are likely to escape the mischief that threatens us by the intrusion of these baby-faced misses."

"Oh never fear," cried the other, "we are both too deeply interested in keeping the King from any other influence than our own, to sit down quietly while it is being undermined. There are fortunately for us many ways of getting rid of a rival, and what will remove one will remove four; and we can count upon the assistance of Mahomet and Mustapha, who are well used to summary punishments for offenders. Our own preservation requires that we should not stand upon trifles; and if these silly fools are determined to rush upon destruction, they can blame no one but themselves when it overtakes them."

Mademoiselle Schulenburg had dropped the whine and the uplifted gaze, and strode along the apartment with a fierce look and a spirit that boded infinite mischief to the unsuspecting objects of her hatred.

"The King we can make sure of; that is more than half the battle," said her companion encouragingly as she emptied her glass; "we can do with him what we like. The English ministers too are quite subservient, and are not likely to give us

any trouble; but, as this is a matter of great moment, we must not wait while these daring little chits are creating an influence in their own favour. We must get rid of them at once, before their pretty faces produce the mischief they are likely to do us."

"That is good advice, my beloved Kielmansegge!" exclaimed her friend stopping short, "we will get rid of them as speedily as possible, and will arrange the matter with our Turkish friends. It would be flying in the face of that gracious Providence who hath so befriended us in a strange land, were we to neglect those means for getting rid of our enemies of which we can so easily avail ourselves; for, as that inestimable vessel, the pious Stifftext says—"

"Oh never mind what he says," interrupted her fat associate, as she took a powerful draught of her cordial.

"Never mind what he says!" exclaimed the other, uplifting her hands and eyes in a pious horror; "never mind what is said by that good, that holy, that admirable, that matchless preacher! Madame Kielmansegge, I am amazed at your iniquity."

"I did not exactly mean you were not to attend

to him," observed her fellow sinner in a soothing tone, not desiring to provoke her superior to a quarrel. "I intended only to intimate the urgent necessity of your attending to me, as I have something to communicate respecting your interests as well as my own, which just now requires your whole attention."

"Oh business, my beloved Kielmansegge, must not of course be neglected," replied the readily appeased lady, "I suppose you allude to some recently discovered vacancy that we can turn to our advantage."

"Ah, Mademoiselle, how clever you are!" cried her companion chuckling at the rapidity with which her religious friend turned from piety to profit. "This is an excellent country, a very good country indeed for all such adventurous spirits as ourselves, who find their Hanover too limited a field for their exertions. Ah, how well I remember the day I left our beautiful Electorate with the determination of following the King, when you and others of his dearest friends hung back afraid of venturing into a country so strange and barbarous as we considered England to be. This escape was an achievement of no ordinary description, for there were a score or so of wretches in the

shape of people whom I had honoured by getting greatly in their debt, who watched my every motion and waylaid me at every step. I should never have quitted Hanover, as you must be well aware, had it not been for that happy idea of disguising myself as our loyal burgomaster desirous of performing the last duties to my departing sovereign, seeing him on ship-board. I reached England safely; and saving that I have been pelted and hooted in public rather more than is quite agreeable, I have nothing to complain of. But I have a good deal to boast of; and next to that best of good things, money, which comes in with abundance that would astonish the poor ignorant women we left at home, I can boast of enjoying the choicest Schiedam that ever gave comfort to a woman's heart."

"Tush!" cried the thin favourite impatient as she stopped in the walk she had resumed; and a frown made her forbidding features more repulsive. "I know these things well. I was a fool for not starting with the King. But I saw as folly as soon as I heard of your arrival here, and the great things you were doing. I lost little time in endeavouring to repair my error; and, you know, managed with little difficulty to recover

my influence over the King. With the good understanding now established between us, that acknowledges my possessing the first place in his Majesty's affections, and divides between us the amount of whatever we may be enabled by our peculiar industry to obtain from him or his subjects, I am perfectly satisfied. In short, I must say with yourself, if some of the noisy people of this large city were not so fond of throwing at me the soil of their streets, instead of reserving it for a more profitable use, I should be well content to pass my days here. But you mentioned something about vacancies. What are they? and who are likely to bid for them?"

These amiable members of the royal harem then entered into a long conversation of a nature too business-like to be reported to the reader verbatim; suffice it to say, that it related to several important offices in the gift of the Crown, which had recently become vacant, and they agreed that they would obtain them from the King. Those which produced the highest emolument, they determined to retain in their own hands; for although it might be impossible that they should fulfil the duties of such offices, they expressed themselves extremely willing to do all that they

could do, which was, to receive the pay attached to them.

As this was a conversation on business, it was astonishing in what a business-like manner it was carried on by both the parties so intimately concerned in it. The Schulenburg having drawn a chair to the table, at which the Kielmansegge sat, and helped herself to the favourite stimulant her friend was enjoying, gave a very serious attention to the most minute details of what she heard, and an animated discussion was carried on respecting the exact sum this office ought to bring, and that person ought to pay ; and although some differences of opinion would occasionally be elicited in the warmth of the debate, it was extraordinary with what an amiable consistency they agreed in making the office or the person produce as large a sum of money as it was possible for them to obtain for it.

At last these matters were satisfactorily disposed of ; still the royal favourite, distinguished by the title of "the Elephant and Castle," did not appear inclined to move from her seat, and her meagre contrast seemed desirous of falling back again from business to religion, as she had already commenced alluding to the wonderful labours of

the pious Dr. Stifftext. But although her corpulent coadjutor sat still, there was an air of mysterious meaning, mingled with a powerful sense of satisfaction, in her fat face, that showed she had yet some communication to make, which communication was one of more than usual importance.

The Schulenberg was just on the point of breaking forth on the privileges conferred on the elect, when her sharp and penetrating eyes caught the expression. She saw in a moment there was something of more than ordinary interest forthcoming, and in that moment dismissed from her mind all the thronging ideas of divine recompense that she was then about giving expression to. She gazed intently on her companion—the look was readily understood. The latter smiled as she replenished the two glasses, and there appeared in the broad disk of flesh that was considered to be her countenance, a meaning that greatly excited the other's curiosity.

It did not long remain ungratified, and as Madame Kielmansegge proceeded to develop the nature of her communication, Mademoiselle Schulenberg was soon satisfied that it was one of the most interesting description that had ever passed

between them. Her dull, spiritless eyes with renewed youth, as she learned the advantages that were about to be thrown her. She never attempted to interrupt her companion; she listened with faculties too even to admit of the employment of speech.

It is scarcely possible that we can give the reader an adequate conception of the picture that the fat lady presented to one; but then it should be remembered that this was a choice specimen of a King's mistress, and that her ideas in the most graphic words in man's language; and that when a prospect so advantageously opened itself before her, words appeared to possess all the obesity of a portly person, together with a hue as golden as the native brass of which they had been cast, and been treble gilt from the more sterling of which she had availed herself so liberally on her arrival in this El Dorado. But all that was done in "our well of purest English" was towards such a conception, shall be attempted.

Madame Kielmansegge gave her friend to understand that she had formed the acquaintance of a certain Sir John Blunt, an Englishman of great repute in the commercial world, who

digions speculator, and had originated a scheme for enriching every body, that appeared to be the most seductive speculation ever invented. The lady did not appear to be perfectly informed of the exact nature of this wonderful scheme; she understood it only as having some connection with the South Sea. But she was well aware it was to be put forth as an investment for those who could be induced to speculate, which there could be no doubt would return a prodigious interest—something like a hundred-fold for the sum invested.

This Sir John Blunt took care to represent himself as a man of the most extraordinary honesty of principle, possessing a mind gifted with the most enlarged views, and a heart overflowing with the abundance of its liberality. The scheme which he was now bringing forward so prominently originated entirely in his excessive philanthropy. He had noticed how slowly and with what difficulty the industrious portion of the community, with humble means, obtained a competency, and he was determined that so many worthy people should have it in their power to realise a fortune in a much quicker, and in a much easier manner. Nor had he been unre-

gardful of the many risks and the slow returns attendant on the ordinary investments of the more wealthy classes, and his benevolence was equally active in favour of the capitalists. In short, by this plan of his, persons of small means were speedily to become rich, and those already wealthy were to make unparalleled fortunes.

The scheme had so far been attended with success, that many persons of note were known to have become shareholders, and South-Sea Stock had risen to a handsome premium. But this success was far from being sufficient to satisfy the benevolent speculator. He looked for much higher patronage, and a much more extensive investment;—so extensive, indeed, that a cooler observer might have thought his views in no slight degree extravagant.

Honest Sir John Blunt, however, knew extremely well what he was about. He was aware of the influence which the German ladies at the palace exercised over their German sovereign, and having ascertained that influence might be procured, he had sought out Madame Kielmansegge, and after sufficiently mystifying her as to the nature of this South-Sea speculation, he proposed that a handsome reward should be im-

mediately forthcoming, if the King could be brought to patronize it. The name of royalty, he well knew would draw after it the name of nobility; and the throne and the peerage would not long remain his patrons before a creditable muster of powerful and wealthy commoners would be found thronging to their ranks.

Madame Kielmansegge had listened as attentively to Sir John Blunt as she was now being listened to. She soon perceived it was a matter which could not be settled without the intervention of her superior; and deferred making any arrangement until she had been consulted. An ordinary case of traffic in government offices, she might have ventured to conclude by herself; but this affair promised to be an example of corruption on so grand a scale, she liked not the responsibility of determining the amount of the bribe: therefore she had, as soon as possible, placed her friend in possession of all the important particulars; and now having greatly refreshed herself with many an ample glass, awaited with some anxiety her decision.

Mademoiselle Schulenburg heard the glowing statement we have condensed with an attention worthy of a lady of her experience in corrupt

practices ; and after a little time spent in earnest reflection, came to the resolution of having some conversation with this benevolent gentleman. He had left an address with Madame Kielmansegge where he could be found, which as it happened to be a celebrated chocolate house in St. James's Street, a trusty Mercury in the shape of the sagacious Mahomet was at once despatched to him with a message requesting his company at the palace.

While the Dutch bottle and the other little evidences of conviviality were being put away, and in the apartment of the King's mistresses something resembling a respect for appearances attempted to be established, we must change the scene of our narrative to the public room of a celebrated house, that stood very near the spot now occupied by the gorgeous mansion that testifies to the taste, the enterprise, and the good fortune of that prince of fishmongers, the late Mr. Crockford.

But this was no imposing edifice with a palatial front, brilliant with plate glass, but a plain brick structure with common glazed windows ; nor could the interior boast of any thing in the remotest degree resembling the gorgeous furniture

and decorations to be found in the more modern establishment. Our great grandfathers were but very little less gregarious than the new generation. They had clubs of many descriptions, besides a variety of places to which those who were of the same politics were fond of resorting; but they knew nothing of the luxury and the taste for display which exist so prominently in the "Houses of Call" established by their descendants in some of our fashionable thoroughfares.

The house to which the messenger of the King's favourites had been despatched, was scarcely to be distinguished from its neighbours, except by the little throng of gentlemen who in fine weather were to be seen lounging at the door, and at other seasons gossiping at the windows of the public room. This room was visited by many persons of note, ostensibly to drink chocolate, which caused such places to be called "Chocolate Houses;" but in reality it was a place of union for hearing and discussing the news of the day, where the gossip, the wit, and the politician were sure to be found in full activity.

The furniture of the room was exceedingly unpretending: there was an open space in the centre,

in front of the large fire-place ; while all round the walls were tables of a size to accommodate five or six persons, with benches having backs to them on each side. There were also to be seen a few plain, broad-backed, arm-chairs, the seats and backs covered with leather, which were considered to be for the sole use and benefit of certain frequenters of the chocolate house looked up to by the rest as personages of considerable authority and influence.

In one of these seats of honour an individual had established himself, whose name was beginning to be much talked of by two very distinct classes of people, the money-making citizen, and the money-spending man of fashion. He was believed to be immensely rich, and he was thought to be in possession of the means of making others as immensely rich as himself. Despite the excitement then prevailing in the public mind respecting the doings of the Pretender and his partisans ; in the two classes of people we have named, there existed a considerable degree of interest towards the South Sea scheme, and its extraordinary projector.

The occupier of the chair was to all appearance a man worthy of all honour and confidence.

The true spirit of benevolence must surely have had its appropriate resting-place in his ample forehead, and the clear complexion and honest open countenance, which a settled aspect of kindness made more prepossessing, seemed to fix the stranger's confidence at once. There was, however, a peculiarity in his manners that did even more in his favour than his trustworthy countenance. This consisted in a plainness of speech that appeared to disdain any artifice; and this freedom from the ordinary cajoleries of speculators was as evident in his person as in his language. He wore everything in a plain and unpretending style, from his wig to his shoe-buckles; and in everything about him, apparently was desirous of showing his abhorrence of all kinds of deception and delusion.

He was a middle-aged man, rather stout and tall; in short, just such a man in aspect and figure as was likely to make a favourable impression on those by whom it was most to his interest to be thought well of: and as he sat in the seat accorded to him near the fire, there were very few of the frequenters of the house, many of whom were persons of distinction, who observed him without feeling prepossessed in his favour.

Such was Sir John Blunt, the originator of

the South Sea scheme ; a scheme, by the way, on the subject of which he scarcely ever was known to open his mouth at the chocolate house ; but he took care it should not suffer from silence ; for he had in his employ plenty of mouths ready to give the subject all the scope admitted of. Persons known to possess money were sure, by some channel or other, to hear all the wonderful advantages Sir John Blunt had at his disposal ; and when they were in company with the speculator, they saw he was so little desirous of deluding them, he invariably met their advances as if he did not wish them to risk their money in such an undertaking. This line of conduct did him very important service.

The room in which he sat did not possess more than half its usual number of occupants ; but they were dropping in by twos and threes, so as to make it apparent that before long the apartment was likely to be tolerably crowded. Many young men of fashion were amongst them, as were not a few old men of fashion ; and the greetings they gave each other were loud, and usually something but ceremonious. They took their customary seats, called for their customary beverages, and if they did not group together near the w

dows or the fireplace, took their newspaper into a corner, and at once proceeded to make themselves masters of its intelligence.

There was a confused hum of voices going on, from the loud oration of the political oracle, to the subdued whisper of the retailer of scandalous gossip; but two circles appeared to be in most active conversation in different parts of the room. One consisted of some ten or a dozen persons, the greater portion of whom were known to be hangers on of the principal ministers, who were descanting in an extremely confident tone on the projects of the Pretender, and the measures taken by government to defeat them.

Some of these appeared to be prodigiously loyal, if any reliance could be placed on the abuse they lavished on the individual who had put himself forward to dispute the title of the British throne with George I, and in the horror they wished it to be thought they entertained of the Pope and of every thing papistical. Others were less zealous; no doubt impressed with the value of not committing themselves too far with one party, till they were certain the other had not a chance of making them suffer for it.

The other circle consisted of gay men of the world, for whom politics had less interest than the voice of the last singer, or face of the beauty. Amongst them the conversation was less animated, but the subject on which they conversed so eagerly admitted of a good deal of collision of individual tastes and impressions; it was the claims of the four youthful beauties who had so recently been presented at Court. Every one had something to say respecting their merits and their attractions, and this something was almost always to be eulogy of the most extravagant kind, and was energetically expressed.

The discussion was maintained with all the ardour of new made partizans, for each of the young ladies had made partizans who seemed anxious to support her claims to be the reigning beauty of the town, as though they were her sworn advocates. Even the cold and distant Fanny Howards had obtained admirers, whose eloquence did her charms ample justice; but she had fewer advocates than the seductive Sophy Howe, who discussed her pretensions in a strain that would have greatly delighted that sensitive young lady.

The great contest, however, lay between

more numerous advocates of the superior pretensions of the two Marys ; and it seemed at one time as though the more fully developed graces of the accomplished daughter of Lord Bellenden were weighing down the child-like purity of the less sophisticated daughter of the Brigadier ; but an old beau, whose opinion on feminine beauty had all the weight which extensive experience should give, very sententiously and most convincingly supported the claims of her fresher and more exquisite loveliness, and a majority of votes having been obtained, Mary Lepel was pronounced to be "The Toast of the Town"—a pre-eminence that her name-sake Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had so long maintained successfully against all comers.

Just as the conclave had come to this decision, a stranger was seen to enter the apartment, who was immediately recognised as one of the King's favourite Turks. He walked with that impressive gravity for which he was so remarkable, towards the place where sat Sir John Blunt ; his neat but plain suit easily pointing him out amongst his more gaily dressed associates as the great speculator.

Mustapha approached him, and in a low voice

intended exclusively for his ear, uttered a few words. The communication did not seem to produce much effect. The fact was, Sir John was prepared for it; and in a quiet manner making his excuses to a staid old gentleman with whom he had been conversing, as having received a summons he could not delay a moment in fulfilling, he followed the swarthy messenger into the street.

It was scarcely possible that any thing could have happened likely to produce so strong an impression in favour of the rising South Sea Stock, as this evident summons from the King to Sir John Blunt. Almost as soon as the door closed upon his footsteps, it became the subject of general conversation. Those who had hitherto paid little attention to the scheme, now listened attentively to the golden prospect it held forth, and the fast growing impression that the King was going to embark in it induced a desire in almost every one present to obtain its advantages for himself.

The great speculator might very well afford to pay handsomely for the co-operation of the King's ugly mistresses, for the belief that his Majesty had invested largely in South Sea Stock, which

throughout the day continued to gain strength, gave such an impulse to this new investment, that it rose in value twenty per cent before the conclusion of the next day.

CHAPTER III.

ROYAL MUSIC.

I've heard that things inanimate have moved,
And, as with living souls have been informed,
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.

CONGRAT

WE read in story books, that we believe is not entirely gone out of fashion, of a certain sonage who was possessed of a pair of boots, enabled him to get on in his journey with the same facility afforded the traveller of the degenerate days by a special train. It is necessary for the author to get over his ground with the same rapidity, and as his seven-league boots pass over time as well as space, of course the employment of them is often of double vantage to his narrative.

To this rapid progress we must now beg to have recourse, and we therefore make this convenient step from the last chapter to the present. We must however give a hasty glance at certain changes and proceedings, which occurred in the interval we find it necessary to stride over, so that the reader may be prepared for their influence upon this story, and the characters who figure in it.

In the first place, though King George I. had not particularly raised himself in the estimation of his people, the wisdom of his able minister, Sir Robert Walpole, and the energy of his colleagues had succeeded in quelling the rebellion which was agitating the kingdom from one end to the other. The conspirators had been baffled. The wily Bolingbroke had availed himself of the first favourable opportunity of escaping to the continent, and quickly established himself as the secretary of the man he chose to regard as his lawful prince ; an office of which he was soon as heartily tired as he then became of the cause he had embraced.

The Bishop of Rochester had not been so fortunate. He was apprehended on a charge of high treason, in his lodgings in Westminster, an

committed as a prisoner to the Tower. Various persons associated with him were deprived of their liberty at the same time, and there were several whose fate was still more deplorable. They had been hurried into appearing in arms and making a warlike demonstration in favour of the Pretender, which ended in their falling into the power of the government against which they had rebelled; many subsequently atoning for their guilt on the scaffold, and many more suffering its penalty in the shape of forfeiture and imprisonment.

The opinion of the great Duchess had been prophetic. She wisely kept aloof from the ill arranged movement as soon as she had obtained an insight into its true nature, and was discreet enough to get as much as possible out of the way of mischief, by retiring to Blenheim just as the explosion was about to take place. Notwithstanding, however, her refusal to join with the Pretender's friends, she was as far as ever from favouring the family on the throne. The slight that she chose to consider had been shewn her illustrious husband by the new King had prejudiced him irretrievably in her eyes. She amused herself by superintending the building at Woodstock, still

going on in the stupendous structure a grateful nation had desired to see raised to one of the greatest of her heroes, and by abusing every thing and every body that happened to attract her Grace's observation.

George I. did not become more popular for the beheadings and imprisonments he had inflicted ; nor did his conduct in any particular degree become more likely to gain him the esteem of his English subjects. He still allowed his Turks to be more in his confidence than his ministers ; and suffered merit and worth to pass unnoticed, whilst he squandered wealth and distinctions on his ugly mistresses, and his little knot of Hanoverian counts and barons. Their power had increased, and was increasing.

We may as well state here that the Marquis of Dorchester received his promised Dukedom, and will henceforth figure in this story as the Duke of Kingston. Another favour he received from government at the same time, for the support of himself and his family, came in the distinction conferred on his son-in-law as ambassador to the Sublime Porte. And Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had astonished all her friends by accompanying her husband on his travels to the domi-

nions of the Grand Signor, whence intelligence of her had already arrived that amazed some and scandalized others of her acquaintances.

The elegant Philip Dormer still retained his position in the household of the heir apparent notwithstanding that his father was considered to be greatly in the confidence of the King, which excited considerable observation, as the jealousy with which his Majesty regarded all his friends was well known; but this would have greatly lessened had it been known that the king was a party to the arrangement. The father and son, who were both courtiers of the most orthodox character, having given him to understand that no arrangement could be so much to the Majesty's interest.

It will easily be believed that George I. continued to pass much of his leisure time in the company of his extremely unprepossessing household and that no opportunity was lost by the king practising upon his prejudices, and profiting of his supineness. Their interview with the far-famed Sir John Blunt had been made so advantageous to them. They knew well the value of their services to so bold a speculator and put an immense price upon it; and al

worthy knight's respectable appearance and bland demeanour did not make them inclined to lower it.

Sir John tried every manœuvre to bring them down to more moderate terms ; but finding his exertions in that way unavailing, and his promises and professions disregarded, he was wise enough to give in to their demands. Dearly, however, as he paid for their assistance, he soon found it to be the best of the many arrangements of the kind he had made. The King bought largely of South-Sea Stock ; the courtiers of course followed his example :—all greedy to profit by the immense advantages held out to them. The Prince was seized by the same mania ; the principal nobility followed ; the gentry began to rush at the same golden bait ; professional men, merchants, farmers, clerks—in short all classes of men invested large sums in South-Sea Stock, and it rose to such a value as no stock had ever attained before.

The excitement on the subject prevailing throughout the country was intense. Every one talked of it to the exclusion of all other matters whatever ; and there was scarcely an individual who had funds in his possession, who was not

eager to invest them in a speculation offering enormous profits.

By some extraordinary transformation Sir John Blunt had ceased to be the very quiet and unassuming personage that used to take his seat at the chocolate house in St. James's Street. He was now dressed as splendidly as any nobleman, was courteous and affable; but it was with the courtesy of a prince; kept a magnificent establishment; was known by his handsome equipage, splendid liveries; became a Member of Parliament; a potentate at home, a patron at various places, and a great man every where.

South-Sea Stock was engrossing public attention to the exclusion of every thing else. High and low, rich and poor, civil and military—classes and conditions appeared as if they talked of nothing else, thought of nothing else, and dreamed of nothing else. There was a wild and delirious fever rioting in the blood of hundreds of thousands of industrious and saving people, who were desirous of sharing in the good fortune of the thousands whom, as it was confidently stated, it had already enriched. Neither sex nor age, station nor profession, was free from the feverish anxiety which love of gain engenders.

The Princess of Wales had completely succeeded in her scheme to raise her consort in the public estimation at the expense of his father. The four youthful Maids of Honour she had selected did wonders in creating an impression among the people in favour of herself and the Prince; and the striking contrast so readily perceivable in the suite of the King, and in that of the heir apparent was eagerly seized upon and made the most of. The German frights, rich and powerful as they had become, were rather less in favour, if possible, than they had previously been; and the Court Beauties, with nothing but their youth and loveliness to recommend them, were as popular as they could be.

The noble position these young ladies had gained, affected them variously. Fanny Meadows had heard stories extremely prejudicial to the inhabitants of palaces, and she seemed to have entered St. James's with an immensity of fear of the perils and dangers which a young and lovely woman could incur; she therefore thought it incumbent on her to be particularly prudent, not only on all she herself said and did to any one, but in all any one said and did to her. And this extreme circumspection occasionally became very ridiculous.

Sophy Howe was altogether of an opposite way of thinking, feeling, and acting. The atmosphere of a Court seemed to exhilarate her far beyond the bounds of prudence ; and a nature, as we have said, much too susceptible for its owner's peace of mind, left itself open to the influence of admiration without the slightest caution, and heedless of anything beyond the strong pleasure of the moment. Her large, sleepy eyes, became humid with impassioned tenderness ; her pouting lips acquired a richer crimson—there seemed to be a softer warmth in her sunny complexion, and her full bust appeared to be swelling to a fulness that no ordinary bodice could control.

It was Mary Bellenden, however, who was evidently most at home at Court. She was in her element. A Maid of Honour at the Court of St. James's was a position exactly suited to her, and the inappreciable accomplishments of which she was mistress. What a field was here for the display of the peculiar learning she had acquired at the Convent of St. Omer, and the precious graces she had brought with her from Paris ; and how readily she availed herself of it !

Lords of the bedchamber, grooms of the stole, gold sticks, and equerries, were all allowed to appreciate her Parisian fascinations ; and even when

an occasion offered, she would venture to delight the King's ministers with her choicest French phrases, and the most eloquent of her little shrugs, nods, shakes of the head, and all her other pretty pieces of pantomime. Indeed, she had soared still higher; for her residence in Paris, if according to her own statement, it had procured her the notice of a French Prince, now taught her to employ her attractions with equal effect upon an English one.

But how fared the less experienced Mary Lepel when she found herself in so proud a position? The lessons she had got by heart out of her favourite romances formed her code of laws. It is true the Duchess of Marlborough had endeavoured to instruct her in the inviolable rules of etiquette; but unfortunately her instructions partook so much of tirades against every one in any way distinguished at Court, that the Brigadier's daughter could scarcely understand anything from them but that the persons with whom she was about to associate were the most ignorant, incompetent, shallow-minded, self-conceited incapables that could be found in the whole world.

Poor Mary Lepel, therefore, was obliged to rely on her reading, and on the native purity of

her mind in gratitude in such a place. The first time she was present at the ceremony, as among all the ladies of the court with whom she had former acquaintance. But she had ever held the office of lady of the robe at the Court of St. James. The queen was a person of the least in fast with the queen and those who boasted in it as their only help; and for that she was in that she had such a help in her own house.

It might be expected that four such beauties as the new Mills of Honour should have been a place so well established as the new Mills of Honour, without their attracting to themselves much admiration. There was at this time many noblemen and gentlemen at the service of the sovereign and the noblemen who were by no means disinclined to visit their house by laying siege to the house of such gracious associates; and amongst them might be found more than one who in person and in manners was well qualified to make a powerful impression upon them.

The Princess of Wales, though apparently much given to the most abstruse studies, and the society of philosophers, was possessed of a heart

that loved to throw facilities in the way of those around her being happy after their own fashion, and she was ready at all times to favour any frolic or assist in any pleasure they were desirous of enjoying. So far from throwing any obstacles in the path of the ladies and gentlemen who were particularly attentive to each other, she seemed to take a delight in encouraging their attachments, and was continually setting on foot some plan for increasing their happiness.

It is not surprising, then, that unchecked by their royal mistress, three of our young Maids of Honour should speedily have gathered about them a tolerably large circle of adorers, whose rival claims upon their favour they showed no disposition to dispose of too summarily. In the case of Fanny Meadows there was a great deal of mischievous pleasantry in the behaviour towards her of several of the gay courtiers. They quickly perceived her foible, and amused themselves by practising upon it. According to her firm belief, never was woman in such dreadful danger as she had existed in since her enviable dignity had been conferred upon her.

Sophy Howe possessed admirers of a different kind, and much more to be dreaded. They were

handsome, gay, licentious men, who sunned themselves in her alluring smiles, and emboldened much as warmed by them, strove eagerly with each other who should possess themselves of treasure which appeared so easy an acquisition. The imprudent Sophy listened to their intoxicating flatteries with far more attention than they deserved, till her senses were excited to a happy delirium that banished far out of sight all prudent considerations. She was light-hearted, thoughtless, and giddy, and much too ready to trust to appearances.

Mary Bellenden never wanted admirers ; and her education had been too carefully completed to leave her in ignorance as to the best method of managing them. She never allowed the fondest speeches or the prettiest compliments to touch her feelings. She took them as words of course ; but only a little more impressive than " How do you do," and " Good day." She had been used to admiration, and not likely to be bewildered by it, however powerful it might be. Nevertheless, for all this unimpressiveness, this vanity, and this affectation, the daughter of Lord Bellenden possessed many good qualities which only wanted a fair occasion for development.

MAIDS OF HONOUR.

Mary Lepel attracted the attention of the wiser and better class of courtiers. There was something in the classical beauty of her features, and the deep spirit of truth beaming out of her dove-like eyes, that kept the licentious at a distance. They looked upon the expression that made her youthful countenance so exquisite; and passed on with the same feeling with which they would regard an unrivalled statue or an inimitable picture.

Those who were the least tainted with the vices of the age thronged around her to offer their homage, and were supremely blessed could they win a smile, or elicit a gracious word. The object of their attentions, however, showed for none of them such partiality as must have filled the rest with despair. Philip Dormer took upon himself the position of chief of this adoring throng; perhaps he considered his devotion deserved precedence from its early exhibition at Petersham Manor, with the felonious perils it had brought upon him; but though the strong tendency to romance led the Brigadier's daughter to regard with something resembling interest, the young nobleman who had figured so prominently in her first adventure, there was no indication in her behaviour of any very strong partiality.

As for the young gentleman, though inclined to be most attractive to his fair coadjutors in the royal household, they did not choose to let him off unscathed for the tricks which, as the Prince's ambassador, he had thought proper to play upon them; and seldom did they lose an opportunity of reminding him in some particular mischievous manner of his several metamorphoses.

The satisfaction diffused, with a few exceptions throughout the palace, at the appointment of our young friends was very great indeed; but no one could have felt it in a greater degree than the Prince. His enjoyment was of the most intense description. Under the influence of his gratification his rather inexpressive features became remarkably pleasant as he gazed from one to the other of the young and beautiful creatures he had succeeded in appending to the Court. Like a bee near some rare exotics, he seemed to hover about the extraordinary attractions around him, uncertain on which to settle.

At present his gallantry was less evident than his delight in the idea of the excessive mortification he had made his father's mistresses endure. His eyes flashed with the most genuine pleasure; and he rubbed his hands briskly as he considered the effect the introduction and residence at Court

of such attractive creatures must have created on those hateful old women.

The Prince did them no injustice in believing that the fat and lean associates in the King's favour were well inclined to strangle every one of the youthful Maids of Honour, and would have done so, could they have effected it with safety to themselves. They had debated the matter with their Turkish and Hanoverian friends, and had sought to effect something with their indulgent sovereign; but the one shook their heads, and recommended patience and caution instead of the bow-string or the sack; and the other, whenever they began to hint, to slander, and to destroy, paid no attention to what was said, and struck out another subject for conversation.

The King indeed, whatever was the degree of influence possessed over him by his sordid and repulsive mistresses, did not choose to conceal the favourable impression that had been made upon him by the fair attendants on his daughter-in-law; and whenever the Princess entered his Majesty's apartments, if she did not have them in her train, he would inquire very impressively after them, and request her to bring them on his next private assembly.

These evening parties in the private apartments of the King were as pleasant things as could have been obtained when some unpleasant company formed a conspicuous portion of the attendants. There was generally a little music, a little cards, his Majesty occasionally joining in both ; for he assumed a certain degree of musical knowledge, and a slight acquaintance with the bass viol ; and it appeared as if he could not completely forget the secret trouble with which he was so constantly visited, when sitting before his music desk with his favourite instrument between his knees, sawing away at some favourite concerto, assisted by a few select amateur musicians either from his own family or the most favourites of his ministers. The Princess of Wales usually presided at the harpsichord—the Prince was rarely present ; but he did occasionally assist. The Duke of Newcastle took the first violin ; the Duke of Devonshire the tenor ; and Philip Dormer Stanly German flute—other performers and other instruments sometimes joining in the concert.

It was considered a great privilege to be invited to these royal musical meetings, and it was thought an especial honour to be commanded to assist at them. The only persons present were

the Royal family, the King's Hanoverians male and female, a limited circle of noblemen attached to the sovereign, and the customary attendants on his Majesty and the Princess. The highly honoured few who belonged to the orchestra had by no means an easy task; for, however able they might be on their several instruments, it was necessary that they should attend less to them than to that of their sovereign.

It so happened that the King had his own notions of time and tune, which were frequently at variance with the established ones; and as his Majesty performed for his own amusement only, and possibly with some idea of gaining instruction, he never scrupled to go over a passage two or three times, and to take any liberties, and to make any blunders that seemed good to him, without consulting or in any way warning the rest of the orchestra. It therefore became essentially necessary for every member of it while giving his eyes to his own music, to give his ears to the King's, and as rapidly as possible follow the deviations and eccentricities of the royal performer. By constant practice this difficulty became comparatively easy, and all managed to keep pretty well together till the conclusion of

the piece; but it had more than opened that very strange effects arose in the course of the performance which the King had never dreamt of.

On one occasion it became apparent that the concerto was going wrong; but the most of these select amateurs could not imagine they were in error. The royal bass proceeded on its course as sedately as that of an elephant. The violin looked in vain backwards and forwards for several bars to see where he could glide in; he could discover nothing resembling what he heard. The tenor, when there was a difficult passage just passed, being well aware of the royal practice, in regard to such, boldly went back and repeated the harpsichord believing the time had altered from fast to slow, slackened its pace, while the flute entertaining a different opinion, went away at double speed.

Such a strange medley was never heard before; nevertheless the King was seen leaning forward with his eyes fixed on his music, grave as usual, with the black cap on his head, working with the Royal elbow, evidently too absorbed in his own performance to heed the confusion.

distracted the audience, and made the other musicians feel extremely uncomfortable. It was not etiquette to take any notice of the King's mistakes, and although the youthful Maids of Honour, and some of the younger courtiers would have laughed had they dared, they were obliged to stand up in their appointed places, and look as unconcerned as they could.

The Duke of Newcastle, who was a particularly studious courtier, and believed he had made himself very agreeable to his sovereign, trembled for the favour with which he was regarded. He had tried all plans. He had played a few notes here and a few notes there; he had ventured to whisper to the Duke of Devonshire, who was in as great a fright as himself; he had nudged Philip Dormer, whose blowing had become more fast and desperate; he had taken a glance at the music book of the Princess without obtaining the slightest glimpse of the nature of the error which had got them all into such inextricable disorder, and every moment he was becoming more bewildered and more incapable of knowing what he was about. Still like the rest he played on, and fancying matters could not be made worse than they were, he began to ply his bow

with all the rapidity he could put into his exertion, fully assured that the sooner he arrived at the end of the concerto the better it would be for him.

All at once all were brought to a stand still by an exclamation from the King, who seemed wonderfully astonished that he should have got to the conclusion of the piece whilst his companions were labouring on, as it then became apparent to him, in anything rather than a good understanding one with another. The Duke of Newcastle turned pale, the Duke of Devonshire looked at ease; Philip Dormer was striving as desperately to appear calm as he had a moment since been to get his flute to its proper place. The Princess looked as much astonished as her father-in-law. The Hanoverian portion of the audience glanced at each other—a kind of telegraph known only to themselves—and the rest of the company were in various states of wonder, bewilderment and suppressed mirth.

“Why, papa,” exclaimed the Princess, who was the only one who dared speak, “you have turned over two leaves at once!”

“Bless my heart, Caroline, so I have,” replied the King referring to his music-book.

frightened musicians breathed again; but they were allowed little time for composure, for without premonitory word or sign from the performer, the royal bass viol was heard commencing the missed pages, and harpsichord, violin, tenor and flute were at work again in a moment. The quintette proceeded much more satisfactorily. To be sure they were obliged to make a jump back, and a slide forward now and then, but his fellow performers most loyally kept close to their sovereign in all his difficulties, and had the satisfaction of being together at the closing bar.

"I think that went very well, Newcastle," said the King in French, sedately tuning his instrument.

"Extremely well, your Majesty," replied his obsequious first violin as he rosined his bow. His Grace had never been in such a fright in his life, and his feelings now were of the most felicitous description. "Your Majesty played with extraordinary precision. I never heard the bass viol in any concerto produce such admirable effect. I appeal to the taste of Mademoiselle Schulenburg to confirm my opinion."

Now the particularly lean and ill favoured favourite of the King possessed about as much

taste in music as she could boast of personal attractions; but the Duke of Newcastle had failed to pay court to her, knowing how much her good opinion would serve him in retaining that of his sovereign.

"Yes indeed," replied the lady, "in your Majesty's hands the instrument is wonderfully effective. It is rare to hear such skilful performance. I am enraptured with the beautiful tone your Majesty produces; it is quite charming, is it not, Madame Kielmansegge?" added she in German to her stout friend.

"Oh divine!" replied that lady pressing her fat hands together in a seeming ecstasy; her burning face looking for all the world as if it had just escaped from some publican's sign of the Rising Sun. "But the King is a wonderful musician."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Count Bernstorff, a sinister looking little man at her elbow. He had been useful to the King before he quitted the electorate, in a manner that gave him a claim to further employment when anything was required where absence of what people more nice in their notions of honour called scruples of conscience was a recommendation.

"Wonderful indeed!" added Count Robethon in a like fervour. Count Robethon was another Hanoverian adventurer, equally zealous in his master's service, and equally ready to do anything that might be required of him.

"The King's skill is only to be rivalled by his judgment," sententiously observed another foreign favourite in the same circle. This was Baron Bothmar, the greatest of all the great men who had left Hanover with their Elector, and who was fully impressed with the opinion that he alone was qualified to take the post of prime minister in England; and in the plenitude of his influence over the new King took care on all occasions to be extremely insolent in his behaviour to Sir Robert Walpole and his English coadjutors, whom the Baron and his countrymen looked upon as occupying places they had come to England expressly to fill.

"Indeed now, it was vastly pretty music;" exclaimed the Duchess of Bolton who was close to the royal party, "and for a King I think his Majesty plays uncommonly well."

The King laughed at the equivocal compliment, but he was always amused by the blunders of this eccentric, yet honest hearted daughter of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth.

It was not etiquette for the Maids of Honour or any of the attendants to talk at these parties unless first addressed by the King. Some one of the most privileged of the court. This was a great restraint to more than one. It was liked as little not being permitted to talk as being permitted to be talked to. The Princess was not unmindful of this ; and as the concerto had concluded, and she saw that the King was engaged conversing with a circle of sequious listeners, she passed to where her attendants were grouped together, all with the very little they had to do there, and let them at their ease and their tongues at liberty. She had very quickly about her a circle of people of both sexes, with whom she kept the most animated conversation.

The King had got into an argument, or rather into a declaration, for there could be no comparison with a King respecting the superiority of French over English music, and as he gave his opinion he could not mentally avoid recurring to the time when he heard all the music that gave him the impression of the superiority of the song of his own country ; the place where it was so familiar to him ; and, more than all, the

from whose delicious voice those melodious songs had proceeded.

"The English have no musical taste," said Baron Bothmar very confidently, and in a manner to show he thought them scarcely worthy of being alluded to. "They have nothing in the shape of music that has the least pretensions to be called musical."

"Nothing at all," added Count Bernstorff.

"Nothing at all," echoed Count Robethon.

"They seem much too fond of all sorts of discordant noises," observed Madame Kielmansegge, with an unpleasant remembrance of the unpopular displays she always met with when recognized.

"I never heard of anything so abominable."

"Nor I," said Mademoiselle Schulenburg, looking vehemently angry from similar experiences.

"They are in general more like so many wild beasts; always howling and yelling."

"I know of no people so barbarous," exclaimed the Baron, who had more than once tasted the flavour of London mud, and therefore could talk feelingly; "they are extremely ignorant, and I should say have no taste whatever for anything intellectual."

"No idea of such a thing," said Count Bernstorff.

“None whatever,” added Count Robethon.

The Duke of Newcastle was too good a courtier to attempt a defence of his countrymen against such opponents, and the Duke of Devonshire did not think there was any necessity for his doing so. But the Duchess of Bolton was not to be influenced by such policy.

“So it isn’t musical we are!” she exclaimed, turning from one to the other with a stare of genuine astonishment. “Oh, thunder and ages, what a mighty strange discovery it is you are making; and all the whilst haven’t we got bushels of songs, and tunes, and jigs, and all manner of music that might make any other people as proud as so many peacocks—so it would. And we’re brute bastes, are we? and have no taste, and no intellectuality, and are extremely ignorant into the bargain. Well, that is news at all events; and wonderfully obliged to ye I am, for one.”

“But your Grace misunderstands,” said the Duke of Newcastle, who wished to prevent any altercation in the King’s hearing. “The Baron alludes only to the common people.”

“Oh, I misunderstand, do I? Faith, I’m glad of that, any how?” replied the Duchess; “but I thought it was of *uncommon* people the Baron talked about; for by this and by that, they’re not

common enough for me to have caught sight of 'em."

Baron Bothmar did not deign to make any answer, though he understood perfectly well what had been said. He only condescended to look a little more disdainful than ordinary. The rest of the Hanoverian party satisfied themselves by the usual telegraphic communication, as expressed by particular glances at each other.

The Duchess looked at the group for a moment, and then said in an under-tone to the Duke of Devonshire: "It's a saying that too much pudding'll choke a dog—an English dog, an Irish dog, or any dog; but it's mighty mistaken I am if all the money in the country would choke a Hanoverian rat." She then left that part of the apartment, and sought the Princess, who was very kindly endeavouring to induce some of the ladies of her suite to assist in the concert.

Her Royal Highness had asked Fanny Meadows; but as Fanny Meadows could not sing, she was readily excused. Sophy Howe pleaded a sore throat, and Mary Bellenden assumed a good deal of alarm at the thought of singing to such an audience. Instead of pressing more urgently, as Lord Bellenden's daughter expected,

the Princess, in her most persuasive manner, turned to Mary Lepel, whom she already began to regard as a favourite, and entreated her to gratify the King and herself with an English song.

"Oh, honey!" exclaimed the Duchess of Devonshire, who came up at that moment, "sing, by all manner of means; for, bad luck to me, I haven't just heard from that Baron Bothmar—"

"Baron Bothmar?" inquired the Princess.

"Baron Bothmar, then, if that's his name, that devil a note of music have we got in this country worth so much as a pinch of salt."

Mary Lepel could not get off such a request as easily as her schoolfellows had done; for she *could* sing, and could *not* plead a sore throat. The remembrance of her performance before the Duchess of Marlborough might have made her hesitate; but the encouraging manner in which the Princess tried to induce her, and the honest-heartedness the Duchess threw into her solicitations, seemed to render an excuse impossible.

Mary Lepel intimated in a modest and gentle way to the Princess, that she was ready to fulfil the gracious wishes of her Royal Highness; and then the Princess took her by the hand, and encouraging her with a profusion of thanks.

praises, led her to the King. His Majesty was still in that reverie which he had fallen into when his mind had dwelt upon the pleasant memories connected with earlier and far happier days.

"I have ventured to bring before your Majesty," said the Princess, approaching her father-in-law, "the daughter of that zealous and able officer Brigadier-General Lepel, whom I have induced to afford your Majesty an opportunity of hearing the true character of an English ballad."

The King slowly raised his eyes, and startled visibly when they met the same beautiful features that had so much affected him once before. Mary Lepel curtsied lowly before her sovereign. He quickly recovered his composure; his troubled aspect even bearing a look of kindness as he gazed on the touching expression of that very lovely countenance.

"Dormer," said he at last to the young nobleman who was watching the scene with an interest he had rarely felt, "lead Madam Lepel to the harpsichord."

The son of Lord Stanhope quickly proceeded to fulfil the royal commands; and it was scarcely possible at that moment, the King could have asked him to do anything more agreeable to him.

“Courage! adorable creature!” he whispered as he gracefully handed her to the instrument. “fear nothing; you have many friends, and at least one, who is the humble slave of your beauty, and my vitals!”

The Brigadier’s daughter felt her heart flutter rather strangely. To be asked by a Princess to sing before a King, and the most distinguished members of his Court, would she thought, be tantamounting even to such heroines as Clelia and Cassandra, and, moreover, she could not but acknowledge to herself that had she been in their heroic position she could not have been attended by a more desirable companion than was at her side,—Princess Oroondates only excepted—nor have been addressed in more appropriate language than that she had just heard.

The movement of the Princess with her youthful Maid of Honour, and her subsequent approach to the harpsichord with the handsome son of Lord Stanhope, attracted the attention of every one in the room. But the German group stared, though they knew not what it meant; and they looked at each other, as if let it mean what it would, *they* meant a good deal of disapprobation and dissatisfaction.

Mary Lepel sat down to the instrument, and

paused a few seconds to satisfy herself which of the various performances that had gained her the approval of her not easily pleased schoolmistress, she should attempt before such an audience. She did not like trying over again the song in which she had so greatly failed when seeking by it the suffrages of her then dreaded visitor the Duchess of Marlborough. She thought of one, and she thought of another, and could not very readily satisfy herself as to which was most appropriate.

She did not like a merry song, it might be deemed out of place amongst such stately people ; she could as little approve of anything remarkably sentimental, as it might not be to the taste of the King. At last she remembered a verse or two of rather pathetic words which had been set to music of an exceedingly plaintive character ; and just as the Princess, noticing her hesitation, came up to encourage her, she commenced singing the following lines :—

THE LOVE LOST.

Where buds are blowing
And sun-beams glowing
And streams are flowing
The live long day,

The lark is soaring
O'er earth's green flooring
And wildly pouring
His thrilling lay.

'Tis there I ponder
In silent wonder
Still growing fonder
With secret joy ;
Of all that smiling
And fond beguiling,
The world's reviling
Shall ne'er destroy.

The sweet entreating
Of that bless'd meeting,
My heart's wild beating,
Could ne'er control ;
For kindling pleasure
Filled full of treasure
In ample measure
Both heart and soul.

But all was seeming
For Fate was scheming
To cloud this dreaming,
So here I stray
Where buds are blowing,
And sun-beams glowing
And streams are flowing
The live long day.

The singer could not complain of having an inattentive audience ; but their attention was natural enough, for rarely had audience so exquisite a singer. Her voice was of that clear and sweet quality of tone so rarely to be met with even amongst the most famous vocalists, that comes upon the ear like the music of a dream, too rich in melody to belong to anything actual and familiar ; and the taste with which it was modulated, the expression of tenderness, of regret, of passion, and sympathy which breathed from every note, appeared to hold the listeners as with a spell.

The little knot of Hanoverians might have been as unconcerned as they looked ; and in particular the Baron might have felt all the disdain his ungracious features expressed ; but there was not another person who did not betray evidence of having been very greatly affected. The King leaned over his bass viol during the progress of the song, his soul apparently absorbed by the sweet sounds he heard. He seemed entirely to forget the miseries of his position. The voice that had so greatly sweetened his first taste of happiness, came again to his heart as it had come before he had allowed himself to be the dupe of deceit and the slave of debauchery. And with

the well remembered tones, came the look so full of innocence and affection, which had given his soul a paradise it so little appreciated. The stubborn heart was touched by the eloquence of those memories which now so irresistibly appealed to it; and with eyes fixed on the lovely singer, and ears drinking in every note of her delicious voice, a tear was seen to trickle down his rugged cheek.

“Oh now, Baron Bother!” exclaimed the Duchess of Bolton, exultingly, “what do you say to that, I’d be glad to know? If you’ve got eleganter music in Germany than what we’ve just heard, ye must be all so many full grown cherubims, and deserve to live in glory. And its meself that wishes ye a safe journey there,” added she, lowering her voice, “every mother’s son of ye, and the sooner the better.”

“That girl will be in our way, Baron Bothmar; she must be got rid of,” whispered Mademoiselle Schulenburg as they left the apartment together. The Baron gazed on her intently, and her look was equally fixed and decided; the two seemed in this glance of concentrated malice thoroughly to understand each other.

CHAPTER IV.

MAIDS OF HONOUR AT TEA.

O wonderful creature ! a woman of reason !
Never grave out of pride, never gay out of season ;
When so easy to guess who this angel should be,
Would one think Mrs. Howard ne'er dreamt it was she.

LORD PETERBOROUGH.

A VERY merry company had assembled in Mrs. Howard's room in St. James's Palace, consisting of several ladies in attendance on the Princess, and several gentlemen in attendance on the Prince. Among the former were our lovely Maids of Honour. Among the latter were the elegant Philip Dormer, Colonel Argyle, the Duke of Argyle's brother, a remarkable fine specimen of a Scottish cavalier, tall, handsome, with fresh complexion and light hair; and Mr. Anthony

They were taking their tea, Mrs. Howard presided, and humour set an example for the associates. Nor did they appear to follow such an example, for some conversation appeared to be any thing could be judged from the experiment that rapidly succeeded as they were in waiting, and by countenance seemed as much to as any of the company.

They sat round the table very gentleman by a lady, who received polite attentions which she required before the tea equipage cups, or dishes as they were called, talking and laughing, and

conduct towards her, did not seem to obtain that return they deserved.

Sophy Howe was somewhat too heedlessly attracting the notice of Mr. Lowther, who had the reputation of being a dangerous acquaintance for a pretty woman. He was a well known libertine; but this was a very common character at the time; he was also a finished dissembler, a practised seducer, in short a lady-killer of the most destructive description. The sort of countenance he possessed was one of those that produce the strongest impressions on the susceptible hearts of the gentle sex. It was soft yet manly; could express a vast deal of tenderness, though its general aspect appeared proud and haughty. He did not pay any marked degree of attention to the very charming young lady beside him; yet she failed in nothing that ought to have had the effect of engrossing his attention. He appeared more inclined to devote himself to his next neighbour on the other side of him, who was the attractive and graceful Mary Bellenden.

But Lord Bellenden's daughter was agreeably employed in playing off her Parisian manoeuvres on Colonel Argyle, and the Colonel did not appear to consider them unworthy his observation. She

in the French capital as so
ordinarily interesting. The Co
pleasant manners, without for
gallant without being licentious
manly soldier-like air about him
strongly in his favour.

Mary Lepel was being ente
Dormer, who was evidently re
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opinion. There was a well-brec
viour that assisted wonderfully
young lady at ease with herself
much struck by the exquisite
Brigadier's daughter when he fir
her father's house, on the memo
have chronicled at the commo
work, and entertained a most fa
of her disposition : but when

Philip Dormier had discovered his fair companion's favourite topic, and he endeavoured to establish a community of tastes. They talked of romances, and his Lordship became eloquent on the plots and characters in *Polexandre*, *l'illustre Bassa*, and *Prazimene*. This of course brought out the Brigadier's daughter, and she spoke with animation running into enthusiasm of 'le grand *Cyrus*,' and *Cleopatra*, and *Prince Oroondates*. Her companion seemed to listen with marked interest to the somewhat exaggerated expressions of the youthful Maid of Honour. She described every hero, and gave her opinion of his qualifications and his conduct, with an amazing deal of sincerity. And she also entered into separate histories of her favourite heroines, making comparisons and observations which no doubt were as edifying as they were entertaining.

Then having run through her spirited recollections of *Artemise*, and *Britomart*, and *Delia*, and *Parthenissa*, and *Artamenes*, and *Almanzor*, and *Alcediana*, and *Doralesi*, and *Alcadate*, and *Parthée*, and *Telesile*, and *Amestris*, and I know not how many more worthies of both sexes, she had treasured up in her remembrance with a list that completely surprised her companion,

the most agreeable opinion of
as well as of her power of me

Thus each of the fair school
tained, or entertained their ex
casionally the conversation b
then these more confidential c
suspended. Mrs. Howard it
to make all her company cont
a common fund of amusement
in her efforts to elicit from
remarks that could not fail to
genuine mirth. In short, these
her auspices, were the delight
attendants.

The gentlemen of the bed-ch
the equeries and other official
who possessed the privilege
Mrs. Howard's apartments, we

permitted to taste since the arrival of the Maids of Honour.

"St. James's appears suddenly to have cast off its leaden dullness," observed Mrs. Howard laughingly, as she continued her duties at the tea-table. "The poor old palace seems as fresh and as lively as a bird that's just moulted."

"I never quarrel with a pretty woman's simile," said Mr. Lowther; "and in this instance, I should not think of making the very slightest objection to it; but I must say, if old St. James's has moulted, venerable bird as she is, she has now got a plumage such as she never could have boasted of before in her life."

"Stab my vitals!" exclaimed Philip Dormer; "I wish she had got rid of her old feathers when she began to disclose her new ones."

There was a general laugh at this allusion to the King's mistresses and the Princess's Maids of Honour, in which the ladies could not avoid joining.

"Yea, it would have been a wonderful advantage," said Colonel Campbell, gallantly; "for with her present plumage, she is a bird of Paradise."

"And she was little better before," continued Colonel Ar

"A metamorphoses, I should find in Ovid," observed Sop

"*Ma foi*, it's vastly pretty," den, "and prodigiously flat. The whole idea seems to give one goose strutting in peacock's feathers."

"Well, my dears," cried M, the laugh that followed the last concluded, "I must say you are thankful for the mighty pretty has been paid you, as you ought. I been one of the feathers who so greatly adorned the dear old have been monstrous inclined to coverers of this extremely satir

served Philip Dormer, as he handed a replenished cup to his fair companion. "'Pon my life, you appear to take as little heed of us as of our compliments?'"

"Ah!" replied the Brigadier's daughter, with a smile, readily joining in the humour of the moment, and the metamorphoses to which so many pleasant allusions had been made, "I am afraid I class them in my mind with those remarkably light riders at Newmarket, who are distinguished by the name of 'feather-weights.'"

The jest was not superlatively bright; but then the lady's eyes were; and its success of course was most brilliant. The gentlemen were enraptured. The ladies in ecstasies; except Fanny Meadows, who thought it extremely improper for a young lady to be bandying jokes with gentlemen.

"Mighty good, upon my word, child!" cried Mrs. Howard, her pleasant features a thousand times more pleasant than ever. "But you dear diverting creature, I never thought you could have said so witty a thing. Apropos, did you hear what the Duchess of Bolton said last night at the concert, to the Princess?"

"What new blunder has my dear Irish friend been making?" inquired Philip Dormer.

...waged more than a

"But what was it, my dear
quired Mr. Lowther. "You fo
and I belong to a sex proverbial
curiosity."

"Oh you mad fellow!" exclaim
laughing heartily.

"Dear tormenting devil!" crie
shaking her finger threateningly
punish you some of these days."

"Don't tell him, *ma chère*!" sai
den in her sprightliest manner. "a
pretty revenge not to say a word."

"Stab my vitals!" cried Philip
pretty woman was ever able to ho
so that sort of revenge is out of the

"I protest now you are horribly
said Mrs. Howard, good humoured

laziest creature in the world ; for she took twenty-four hours a day to do nothing in, and she never did it half."

Peals of light-hearted laughter followed this anecdote, together with several exclamations of "excellent," "admirable," "charming ;" and others of a similar nature.

"May I perish if the Duchess is not a prodigious favourite of mine," observed Philip Dormer. "Her never-failing good-humour, her simplicity, and her perfect honesty of heart, are as irresistible as her blunders. She relates an anecdote in that delightful Doric of hers, that invariably makes it as picturesque as it is entertaining. I remember when the Duke of Devonshire was mentioning some great general who, wanting to get into Parliament, sent his portrait to decorate the Town-hall of a small place in Yorkshire where his name had never been heard of, the Duke appeared at a loss for a reason for such a proceeding. 'Oh, holy Paul,' exclaimed the Duchess, 'sure and isn't it as plain as a pike-staff, that the gin'ral's began to *canvas* the borough?'"

This anecdote caused the mirth of the company to break out afresh.

"She's an original, stab my vitals !" added Philip

arrived."

"And pray who is Handsome Hervey Mary Lepel.

"Lord child, havn't you heard of E Hervey?" demanded Mary Bellenden. *possible?"* and here the beauty exhibited the most effective of her French gesticul

"Surely you know my Lord Hervey Mrs. Howard.

"Zounds! every body knows Hervey claimed Philip Dormer.

"It would be prodigiously wonderful if every body didn't know Hervey," observed Lowther. "Hervey having taken such pains to make the whole world acquainted with him."

"But Madam Lepel is not likely to re

the bed-chamber," answered Mrs. Howard; "but however honourable that office, it happens to be the least of his dignities; for he is indisputably the grand Signor of Fashion—the King of the Dandies, the Czar of the Maccaronies, and the great Kham of taste, wit, and breeding."

The ladies laughed again very prettily.

"Stab my vitals!" cried Philip Dormer. "Hervey is too great a personage to be laughed at. His nod is as powerful as that of Jove."

"Dear now!" exclaimed Mary Lepel, incredulously.

"Indeed he is the most absolute of despots," added Anthony Lowther. "No one who possesses any pretensions to birth or breeding, can be permitted to make a figure in the world without his countenance and approbation."

"Oh, vastly pretty!" observed the Brigadier's daughter, with a shake of her little head. "I suppose, then, I had better present myself to this all-powerful gentleman, and ask him for his good offices."

"*Ma foi!* what a little simpleton you are," said Mary Bellenden, desirous of showing her greater knowledge of the great man. "My Lord Hervey is a nobleman, whose superior taste is so gener-

ally admitted, that the whole world of fashion governed by it. It is so, child, *sans doute*."

"Yes; Handsome Hervey reigns supreme amongst us," cried Mrs. Howard. "The Princess is as much under his influence as the humblest of her retinue."

"Dear now, this is all very strange!" exclaimed Mary Lepel, looking a little puzzled. "I wonder how he came to possess such authority."

"Why, the truth is, child, he is very handsome," replied Mrs. Howard, "and he is also the best-dressed man at Court; and his manners extremely graceful. He dances divinely, and like an Anastasia, is a matchless poet, a brilliant wit, and in every way a most accomplished gentleman. I will not say that he is free from affectation, or deny that he gives himself the most extraordinary airs; but the Princess thinks him the most perfect example in the kingdom of a finished gentleman, and, as in duty bound, we follow her opinion."

"May I perish if Handsome Hervey is not looked up to as the king of us all," added Philip Dormer. "We are led by his judgment, and governed by his influence. I dare say you will think him a prodigious quizz, for he has the mo-

extravagant notions ever heard of in this world. But he can say a good thing when he likes; and his manner of saying it is pretty sure of being the best part of the jest. Some of us had got him to pay a visit to the museum of an enthusiastic naturalist, who, among other marvels, shewed us a toad that had been inclosed for centuries in a block of granite. Hervey looked on the object with intense commiseration in every feature, and said in his dry, quiet way, 'I'm sure the poor wretch is monstrously to be pitied; his is, indeed, a *hard case* !' "

Hardly had the laugh subsided, when a servant announced Mr. Secretary Craggs; and then Mr. Secretary advanced into the apartment, where he knew himself to be welcome, in his usual jaunty and gay manner.

"Ladies, I kiss your fair hands: gentlemen, your most obedient. Mrs. Howard, I am charmed to see you !" cried he, as he made his way towards the tea-table, with his cocked-hat under his arm. "The enjoyment of such society pays a man for the endurance of a world of trouble and anxiety. Our dear Howard is a sort of female St. Peter, who has the keys of heaven in her charge; and when so unworthy a creature as I,

"Lord! Mr. Secretary, y
overpowering!" replied Mrs
her new visitor with a cup o
rage she had been dispensing
got some state secrets to te
lock my gates against you an
don't contribute to our amu
know something of important
know from any other source."

"Oh, you horrid wretch!"
in the same strain; "you
Ladies," added he, bowing to
mour, "I am come on an err
and confidential."

"*Ma foi*, how delightful!
lenden.

"Yes, lovely Bellenden; y
yes, adorable Howe: --"

ladies, evidently in the highest state of pleasurable excitement.

"Stab my vitals, now, Craggs, I do believe you are only bamming these our fair companions," said Philip Dormer; "you statesmen are so habituated to deluding each other, that you cannot help playing the same game amongst your friends."

"Could I dare to deceive beings so celestial!" cried the Secretary of State, in a sort of horror at the idea. "I appeal to the gallant Colonel: I appeal to the other inestimable gentlemen."

"Oh, I dare say you'd be deuced glad to do it!" exclaimed Anthony Lowther, mischievously.

"What sacrilege! what profanity!—I'm shocked; I'm horror-struck!" cried Secretary Craggs.

"Well, never mind," said Mrs. Howard, in a consolatory tone, "I'm used to a great deal of what might shock other people; and I don't think you are likely to be much the worst for what has ceased to affect me; so away with your horrors, and out with your secret."

"*Ma foi*, I am dying to hear this secret," added Mary Bellenden.

"And so am I," said Sophy Howe.

"Oh, we're all dying, Sir," said Mary Lepel, in a manner the very reverse of so critical a state.

“I hope you are not entertaining yourself expense;—it would show monstrous wanting in you, after you have been made aware of the desperateness of our condition.”

“If the wretch doesn’t tell us his secret at once,” observed Mrs. Howard, “we’ll see if we can’t do worse than the Mohocks did the German who met them, when they met, they so pricked him with swords to make him jump, that he could not find more holes in his skin than a sieve; and no skill was exerted in vain to darn him into a state fit to be seen!”

“Ladies, I entreat, I conjure, I supplicate, I urged the Secretary, vehemently; “your piercing and chanting looks pierce me through and through as it is. ’Tis a refinement of cruelty to stab me with sword-points.”

“Your secret or your life!” cried Mrs. Howard.

“I deliver it up at your summons, in answer to you not to cast me quite impoverished into the world,” replied Mr. Secretary Craggs, with the pathos of an old Hunk being rifled by a highwayman on Hounslow Heath. “To my dear lady give ear. This is the sum total. The King has just consented to give a grand State Ball on Monday night at James’s.”

"A grand State Ball!" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices, in as many different stages of astonishment.

"A grand State Ball at St. James's! Stab my vitals, that is pleasant intelligence for us, and all idle gentlemen hereabouts," said Philip Dormer.

"A grand State Ball at St. James's! 'Tis the charmingest news to us poor women we have heard this many a day," said Mrs. Howard, equally animated.

"Oh, won't I dance! and won't I have plenty of partners!" cried Sophy Howe, exultingly. "I declare now I could jump out of my skin in joy at the prospect."

"It's mightily to be hoped some one would be at hand to jump into it," observed the gallant Secretary. "Such a skin must not be lost for want of an occupant."

At this moment when all were extremely busy congratulating themselves and each other, on the gay prospect before them making engagements for certain dances, and consulting confidentially what should be done on such an occasion, the door opened, and the Prince of Wales was announced. Every one rose, but the Prince with great good humour insisted on their re-occupying their seats.

He was a frequent visitor to that apartment, sometimes, as many persons seemed to be well aware for the pleasure of obtaining those private interviews with the "good Howard" which had already affected that lady's reputation; but more lately for the gratification of equally confidential communications with one or other of the admirable Maids of Honour.

The poor Prince was a little embarrassed with the prospect of so much beauty. He considered that one of the first duties of the female attendants of his consort was to listen favourably to all the little tender speeches with which he might think proper to address them, and he took all possible pains to make this part of their occupation sufficiently familiar to them. But the young ladies being so extremely beautiful, and they being almost always together, made his proceedings rather awkward and undecided.

He would have given a good deal had there been but one Maid of Honour, or were it possible he could make himself agreeable to but one at a time; but the charming creatures were scarcely ever apart, and he knew not how to disburthen his mind of his devotion, for he entertained an impression that it was not exactly proper to make

love to one in the presence of the rest. Still he could not resist being as affectionate as he could to them all, and generally paid a visit once a day to Mrs. Howard to improve his acquaintance as much as was possible under the circumstances. "Ah my dear Howard!" he exclaimed, going up to that lady in his usual cordial manner; "how is all with you? But you look so charming, I need never ask nothing about you," and he chuckled her under the chin, and, as he believed unseen by any of the company, winked at her in a style somewhat more amatory than courtly.

Then moving towards the quiet and sedate Fanny Meadows, he proceeded to address her in much the same strain. "Oh mine little vestal you is here, eh? What for you look so demure? Ah you zly rogue, if I was to make love to you, I should soon cause you for to look another way."

"Just so!" answered Sophy Howe, laughing heartily—a freedom she never failed to take with his Royal Highness; "a very natural consequence of such love-making, I should think."

"Ah mine dearest Sophy, you is sure to have something funny to say; and you laugh always, as if it was for von vaager. Ah mine pretty love, if

you vas mine, I would make you laugh on side of your bretty mout."

"You would get nothing by that; for v on one side or the other, I should be sure laughing at your Royal Highness," retort very saucily.

"Prag is der goot dog, but hold vast is der dog," he replied slily pinching her arm passed by her. "But here is Madam Pel Ah, Madam Pellenden, I am gladder to than any ting in der vorld. Oh you tear litte how pootiful is your eyes!" he added in per.

"*Ma foi*, your Royal Highness does m honour," replied Lord Bellenden's daughter.

"Not at all, not at all, my tear littel he answered with more truth than he was of. "I never see noting vat is rely agribb meet your bretty face," he added in a low v he squeezed her hand, and looked most adm at her very handsome features.

"You are extremely polite, Sir," said Ma lenden quietly, and then added, courteously not your Royal Highness better be seated!

"No, I shall stand, and grow petter," the Prince.

"I'm very glad to hear it," she answered in a tone which very nearly set all her fair companions into a titter.

"So you tink I vant to grow petter!" he exclaimed; then turning to Mary Lepel, added, "vat you say Madam Lepel; do I vant to grow petter, do you tink? Eh, you sharming littel rogue."

"What, your Royal Highness wants is not so clear as what your Royal Highness requires," said Sophy Howe laughingly.

"Go along vid you; I vill bunish you ven I am king. It shall be high treason vor you to look at a man. Would not dat be goot bunishment, Madam Lepel?"

"It depends on circumstances, your Royal Highness," said the Brigadier's daughter with great simplicity; scarcely knowing what reply to make.

"Circomsdances? Vat circomsdances my tear littel lofe?"

"As to whether the man be good or ill looking to be sure!" replied Sophy Howe with a laugh.

"My tear Sophy, you are von incorrigible rogue. I vill have you put into der billory, and into der whipping boast, and into der stocks, and you shall have pread and vater, and noting else, and

... some gentleman had mistaken .
Council ; and Mr. Secretary r
speech, acknowledging that such
ly enough, which brought forth
natured banter from his Royal H
had sufficiently amused himself
the young statesman, he turned
the other gentlemen, and he ra
upon their partiality to Mrs.
Every now and then he contr
opportunity to whisper some
into the ears of one of the Ma
trod upon their toes, or nudged
made use of some other equal
attracting their attention.

He was told of the State I
which he received with as much
excited previously to his Royal

partners; but had great doubts that in England they would be able to discover the only two proper persons that deserved to pair off with such "antederluvian grockodiles":—one of whom was "der Teuvel," and the other was "der Bope."

In this way the time passed on very pleasantly till the Maids of Honour were summoned to attend on the Princess; the Prince then made his bow, taking with him his gentlemen; but not forgetting, before his departure, to whisper to each of the young beauties, the warmest protestations, and the most intense admiration.

CHAPTER V.

A STATE BALL.

Let Sporus tremble! What! that thing of silk!
Sporus, that mere white curd of asses milk!
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel!

POPE.

THE wise policy which had led the unpopular King to assume a particular graciousness towards such of his subjects as appeared at the levée, induced him to proceed another step in the same path by giving a State Ball, in which were to be united as many members of the nobility and gentry, as the grand suite of apartments would hold. To these measures he acceded without asking the advice of his Hanoverian counsellors of either sex;—who would certainly have dis-

suaded him from them if he had ; for they looked with jealousy upon any thing resembling friendly association of the sovereign with the English. It had been the work partly of his ministers, and partly of the Princess.

The King felt too that he wanted amusement. His own thoughts were a perpetual nightmare ;—an unceasing terror and anxiety pursued him from his cabinet to the council, and from the council to the apartments of his mistresses. He felt there were more amusing resources even than cutting paper figures, or playing at quadrille with an ugly woman ; and since he had seen the new faces—and very attractive ones he could not help considering them, extremely to the alarm of the Hanoverian phalanx, who guarded him so closely—his daughter-in-law had introduced into the palace, he felt a desire that every day seemed to grow stronger, to see more of them. Perhaps he took alarm at the efforts his heir was making to ingratiate himself with the people, and resolved to shew himself as much at home in his new kingdom, as he had been in his old electorate.

The announcement of so unexpected an entertainment produced a prodigious effect throughout the palace. From the Lord Chamberlain, to the de-

puty assistant scullion in the royal kitchen, all were in a wonderful state of bustle, labour, and activity. There were extensive preparations to be made in every department : a great deal had to be done, and of course a great deal had to be said. Some of the authorities found it necessary to add to their avocations, by refreshing their memories with the last measures, and the most fashionable steps. Lords of the bedchamber were found in quiet corners rehearsing favourite country dances. In the ante-chambers, gold-sticks were gavotting with clerk-marshalls, and equerries minuetting with exons in waiting.

But throughout St. James's there were no persons on whom the news produced a more decided effect, than on our young Maids of Honour. The prospect of a ball to the female imagination, is at all times a most agreeable one ; but a State Ball !—an entertainment presided over by the sovereign, in which all that is most splendid and captivating is sure to exist, and the most brilliant company may be found, is as far above all ordinary balls the most experienced of the sex may have enjoyed, as the fair light of the stars exceeds the dull glimmering of the watchman's lanthorn.

The fair school-fellows were in a state of consi-

derable excitement. The impression they had already produced, they had every reason to believe was greatly in their favour; but a much greater trial than they had yet endured, lay before them; and their success would depend on the manner they acquitted themselves on that occasion. The approaching entertainment would contrast them with all the loveliest of the land, many of whom might be much better qualified than themselves to gain the verdict of the assembly as the brightest ornaments of the Court; and they too were conscious of labouring under the disadvantage of having, through the hundred tongues of rumour, excited public expectation respecting them, to a height it was scarcely possible for them to realize.

For a wonder, Fanny Meadows was so taken up with what she should do, and what she should wear, that she forgot to express her usual scruples. Sophy Howe was as absolutely unscrupulous. She determined to enjoy herself without restraint; to say what she liked, and do as she pleased, and attract as many admirers as she could.

Mary Bellenden was never so well satisfied as on the eve of this delightful entertainment. A Court Ball was the very scene in which she was

born to shine. The advantages she possessed over her young contemporaries in her "finish" in France, was now to have such a field for display, as must at once establish her pre-eminence on a basis that could never be disturbed.

Mary Lepel was a little bewildered. She felt that she was to make one in a splendid exhibition, and with a great degree of resolution made up her mind to play her part as effectively as could ever have been done by the best-conducted heroine of her acquaintance.

To appear worthy of their position as Maids of Honour, the Princess had given directions to her own tire-woman to prepare everything requisite for them in the best taste, and of the handsomest materials. Never could there be so admirable an opportunity for her to produce on the mind of the higher classes of the country, by means of her beautiful attendants, a favourable impression of her Consort; and she took great pains to make the most of it. She gave them much kind advice; she deavoured to moderate the spirits of the overbold, and raise the confidence of the timid; and instructed them in the etiquette that governed every thing in these gay meetings.

The important night arrived; and such a

of sedans, chariots, footmen, link-boys, soldiers, and constables, St. James's Street and Pall Mall had rarely seen in their palmiest days. And such a din of shouting, swearing, crashing and abusing, those respectable thoroughfares had as rarely heard. Outside the palace it was not only a Babel at the confusion of tongues, but a Babel in a state of riot and uproar of which the inspired text gives no adequate idea. The link-boys out-bawling the constables, and the coachmen out-bawling both.

Inside, the most enlivening music cheered while it tranquillized the company as they escaped from the deafening uproar through which they had been obliged to pass. The whole of the magnificent state apartments were thrown open; the largest fitted up as ball rooms with an excellent orchestra, and the smaller ones adjoining were card-rooms for the accommodation of the King and such as were inclined for play. There were also refreshment rooms where every thing that could tempt the sated, or refresh the weary, could be procured in abundance.

The palace officials of every grade and character were to be seen everywhere most gorgeously attired, ready to assist every body, or to get in

every body's way according to circumstance and the company came streaming up the grand staircase like a meteor—a mass of velvet, satin, embroidery, diamonds and jewels of incalculable value. And then they spread through the grand apartments glittering with chandeliers and burning with wax-lights, making the place look like a fairy garden in the glare of a perpetual sunshine.

A great number had been invited ; but the invitations were well distributed, and nearly all the distinguished families whose loyalty could be depended on, or whose love of gaiety could be excited, had been included. Some came to be seen, and not a few more to see. The royal staircase with both objects in view. The majority consisted of those who were young, and those who chose to consider themselves young. For whom balls are as necessary an amusement as coral and bells to the infant. But there was a considerable minority whose youth had bid them a long farewell, and who could amuse themselves only by looking on with vain longings and vainer regrets ; or by seeking the excitement of the card tables, and losing or winning a few hundreds in each other's society.

On this occasion the art of dress and the

tification of personal vanity were carried to the most extravagant excess. Respectable old dowagers, such as the Duchess of Buckingham, were not satisfied unless they carried about them the wealth of a province; and the most juvenile of the party had taken equal care to array herself in all the costly finery her family could procure for her. The variety of head-dresses exceeds belief. Some of the faded belles of Queen Mary's reign still adhered to the towering structure that had then been so much the rage; younger beauties adopted a more becoming *coiffure*, and refrained from powder, though they evidently were partial to patches. Hoops, too, were of various sizes. Some of the elder and more ambitious appearing as if they required a whole apartment for themselves, whilst the younger allowed their drapery to swell out from their hips sufficiently to make more enticing their slender waists and graceful shoulders.

The gentlemen were not less ostentatious in their display of velvets, embroidery, and fine cloths, with matchless cambric and immaculate stockings; and their wigs varied almost as much in their dimensions as the petticoats of their ladies, and many were much more expensive.

There were several elderly beaus present who rivalled their juniors in the extreme richness of their apparel. Some who boasted a prince's income displayed their resources partly as a means of recommending themselves to their fair friends and partly from a love of ostentation; for vanity and pride were the predominant characteristics of many of the elder grandees of the Court of George I., and in few did these failings flourish with more luxuriance than in the arrogant Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, who was one of the company, and the gay and profligate John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, with whom he was conversing.

Some were talking politics, some scandal; the immense rise of South Sea Stock occasioned numberless communications. Many conversed only in vile detraction, many in idle gossip, and not a few chose matters still more objectionable. But the general topic of the curious of one sex and the gallant of the other was the beauty of the new Maids of Honour. On this subject the young ladies were a little incredulous, the elder ones rather contemptuous; but the gentlemen, young and old, rivalled each other in their enthusiastic expressions.

A group had congregated near the orchestra. Prominent among them was a handsome man of medium height, superbly dressed, whose wild daring glance dwelt licentiously on every fair form that came within his observation.

"I tell you they are all Venuses," said he with an oath with which the reader can dispense. "Dormer swears that the more he becomes acquainted with them the more ravishingly beautiful he thinks them. And Buckingham says, the old sinner ! that even in Charles's days, when the market was so well stocked, he never met with anything so much to his taste."

"I hope they will prove Venuses, Wharton," said a gentleman plainly dressed, thin and tall in person, and much the senior of the last speaker, whose look, however, was scarcely less rakish than that of his companion. He was well known there and every where else as the bold and eccentric Earl of Peterborough. "I hope they will prove Venuses if we can only persuade the dear creatures we are the Adonises fate has provided for them."

"No, no," exclaimed the Earl of Berkeley laughingly, "no Adonis for me. I rather think, if my schoolboy recollections are not confound-

edly at fault, that that respectable personage found making love to Madam Venus rather too much for him."

"Oh yes, but that's often the case when the women get so deucedly fond," replied the young profligate. "I, like Adonis, have found in love-making a *horrible bore*."

"Mars, perhaps, would be a more agreeable character to represent," said Lord Peterborough, having enjoyed sufficiently the Duke of Wharton's joke. "That old soldier besieged the goddess with all the success either of us could desire as his representative."

"Very true, Peterborough," answered his Grace. "But you see he soon discovered others had as much right to the citadel as he. Now I don't deny but that I could very readily give up possession after I had had sufficient acquaintance with my conquest—for I am devilish accommodating, and can't exist without variety—but with such sieges as we are alluding to, I want no comrades."

"Oh, your humble servant!" exclaimed Anthony Lowther. "That is as much as to say that these four marvellous beauties, for each of whom a hundred young fellows are madly in love, must fall to you, and to you only. Zounds!

What a monopolizing conscience the fellow has! Wonder he doesn't lay claim to all the sex at once!"

There was a general laugh, in which the young Duke joined. "Don't be alarmed," he replied, "you shall have your chance as well as the rest."

"Oh you're vastly civil; devilish generous, 'pon my soul!" cried the other.

"But what does Hervey say about them!" inquired Lord Berkeley. "Hervey is quite a Lord Chancellor in such judgments."

"I don't think Hervey has seen either of them. He has been away from the Court some time," said another.

"I was told he returned to-day," observed Lord Peterborough.

"Curse me if there's not the finest show of women here to-night I've ever beheld in one place," remarked the Duke, scanning the features of the lovely women who approached him, with a glance that made many of them turn theirs in a different direction. "It makes one think the Sultan had turned out his seraglio, and that they were all marching about here to find other masters."

“By Jove then they don’t seem in a hurry make up their minds,” said Lord Berkeley; “~~B~~ here comes the Duchess of Cleveland; I’ll ~~wage~~ a hundred this venerable Light of the Harem comes to let fall her handkerchief at Wharton’s feet.”

This idea, which was received with a loud laugh from his companions, made the Duke, with a very unflattering observation respecting that profligate old woman, remove himself to another part of the room, where he joined the Dukes of Somerset and Buckingham. They were also talking of the Maids of Honour.

These old libertines who ought to have been preparing for their graves, were comparing with the *gusto* of connoisseurs the claims for pre-eminence of the beautiful attendants of the Princess, and again comparing their attractions with those of the different toasts they had known in the hot days of their young manhood. They spoke learnedly of eyes, black, blue, hazel, and all the most admired shades; and had a great deal to say respecting complexions. Shapes were then canvassed, the stout and the thin, the tall and the short, were brought in review, and fairly considered: and as each brought forward his vast experience

of womankind, there was as much knowledge thrown on the subject as ought to have made the pursuit of a pretty woman as simple as the first rule of arithmetic.

“Zounds, here is Wharton!” exclaimed the elder of these Nestors of gallantry; “When are we to behold these dear creatures? Positively I am burning with impatience to feast my eyes on their exquisite beauties.”

“I have come here for no other purpose; and as I hope for their smiles,” said the other, “I am dying to see them.”

“Hallo there!” cried the Duke of Wharton in tones of astonishment, “confound you if your young blood isn’t getting up alarmingly. I wouldn’t trust one of them with you, strike me dumb! No, not one; it could lead to nothing but the old story.”

“To what old story does your Grace allude?” inquired the Duke of Buckingham.

“Oh! one mighty edifying,” replied the young Duke, glancing from one to the other of his ancient rivals, “with a moral that ought to do you a world of good.”

“Bless my heart, and what story is it?” asked the Duke of Somerset, with a chuckle.

of the state apartments : the musician
ed a grand march with extraordinary
a lane having been formed through
of his bowing and curtsying subject
known snuff-coloured suit of the Ki
other decoration than the ribbon as
seen advancing along, the wearer
he received the acknowledgements of
whom he was acquainted, and pas
words to the few who could converse
It was an awkward attempt at royal
bear in the same suit might have done
well ; but his guests had not been
their expectations, so that his undigni
nour created no disappointment.

George I. was followed by the
Princess of Wales ; the former had
more attention to dress than was usual

extremely gracious to the gentlemen who recognised him when a very pretty woman happened to be his near neighbour, speaking kindly to the one, while he looked still more kindly on the other. The Princess was superbly dressed—her tall figure and stately carriage, her countenance so mild yet so majestic, and her beautifully shaped hands and arms, were not lost upon the admiring crowd. She appeared to immense advantage by the side of the mean figure and inexpressive face of her husband.

The royal family passed ; but those who immediately followed attracted the most attention. They were the Maids of Honour. The crowd pushed forward eagerly to get a glimpse of them ; by the way some of the company had in the morning crowded and pushed with equal anxiety to purchase South Sea Stock, which was now at double its previous value. Those who were in the front rank enjoyed a comfortable stare, but many were obliged to be satisfied with a glimpse. Amongst the former were the two noble Dukes described in a former page ; they honoured each of the young ladies with a rapid yet searching scrutiny, in which every grace was noted as correctly as if it had been put down in an auctioneer's catalogue.

Wharton to himself, as he got out of

In the meantime the youthful beauty
ed in the suite of their royal mistress
by a distinguished train of gentlemen
ance on the royal family; from the
Duke of Newcastle, the Lord Chamberlain
to the scornful Baron Bothmar, who
himself the real King of England.
Hanoverians was of course the ugly
with her two ugly daughters, and her
friend Madame Kielmansegge, who, as
who had beheld the admirable Maids
excited remarks far less favourable
have gratified them had such reached

The King's favourite seemed not
of the prevailing impression against
she noticed the admiration excited by

Fanny Meadows assumed to be quite shocked at so many men staring at her ; whilst Sophy Howe on the contrary looked as if she particularly liked it. Mary Bellenden did not look so ; she wore the air of a beauty to whom admiration was a matter of course ; but Mary Lepel was disconcerted. She did not affect being shocked, like Fanny Meadows ; but she found herself obliged to cast her eyes to the ground, to escape seeing the impassioned looks directed towards her.

The royal family having passed through the state apartments, and sufficiently entertained themselves for the time with noticing the guests, the King retired to the card-room to play with his Hanoverian friends, or with the Duke of Newcastle, and a select few of his English subjects who were willing to pay their court to his favourite mistress, and lose their money.

The orchestra now struck up a lively air, and the dancers began to arrange themselves for commencing the evening's entertainment. The Prince had wandered from the side of his Consort, and was industriously engaged in talking nonsense in bad English to every pretty woman who would listen to him. He did not attempt to dance : it would have increased the amusement of the company if he had.

The Princess did not choose to dance, as there was no one of her own rank to whom she could give her hand ; so she sat down in a sumptuous seat at the top of the principal apartment, where she could at one and the same time see the dancing in which she greatly delighted, and enjoy a metaphysical argument on the nature of Free Will, with some learned scholars who were amongst her company, to whom dancing was impossible, whose society she fancied was almost equally entertaining. This enjoyment might be thought to be rather out of place ; but her Royal Highness had strange tastes, and was just as likely in a ballroom to commence an argument on some disputed point in religion, as on an obscure question in metaphysics.

We must leave the Princess to her learned associates, consisting of Herr Muddlewitz, a German philosopher, from Halle ; Monsieur Skyscraper, a French astronomer, from Geneva ; and Dr. Stifftext, an English divinity doctor of Oxford, who stood bowing round her chair, each entertaining a high sense of the honour done him by her Royal Highness's notice ; and each wondering with all the powers of his mind, what could induce her to notice his companions. We must take ourselves to the dancers, for the Princess had

given directions that the ball should commence, and the Master of the Ceremonies had done his duty, the ladies being accommodated with partners, and standing in their proper places ready to set their pretty feet in motion at the first summons.

The fair schoolfellows stood up with the rest, each with her partner. Fanny Meadows with Sir Lucas Colpepper, Sophy Howe with Anthony Lowther, Mary Bellenden with Colonel Argyle, and Mary Lepel with Philip Dormer—an arrangement that had been in existence long before they entered the ball-room. “Money Musk” was most spiritedly played by the capital band in attendance, and as spiritedly was it danced. The music of the ball-room in the early part of the last century went directly to the feet of the company, and often with such power, that it seemed able to make the cripple leap, and the halt to bound as if their heels were of Indian rubber. At least such might be said of the music of our national, or, as it was commonly called, country-dance. And many of the tunes were of considerable antiquity. They had served for the saltatory frolics of time-honoured Queen Bess; they had given spirit to the far wilder revels of our Merry

... games & their memory so
departed. Gone is the r
Cushion dance;" and "Tren
lete as the hoop. In place of
phrases, we have an endless
fooleries each more absurd t
save very old-fashioned peopl
who are wise enough to cli
amusements of their ances
sounds that so delighted the
gone age have passed away, b
racteristic and picturesque
wholly our own, an endless vari
contributed by a dozen differen

"Money Musk" was in great
riod, and with gay hearts and
wearers of velvet coats and sa
ponded to the call it made now

ent down the middle and up again, hand-in-hand
th anemonies. Indeed, nothing could be more
posing in its way, or more agreeably join re-
tion with dignity than the stately figure of
gentleman with his sword by his side, in all
consequence of wig, ruffles, and embroidery,
ng by the lady as she floated buoyantly along
er swelling hoop and elaborate head-dress,
y one like a graceful heroine leading her
ht, a willing prisoner, at her side.

ie fellow pupils of the incomparable Penelope
andstern had been well grounded in all the
e arts, so that they were qualified to make as
a figure at a royal ball as any one there; and
partners had no fault to find with their per-
ances, notwithstanding they were considered
mely good judges of a young lady's qualifica-
. Occasionally there was an opportunity to
an observation, of which they generally
ed themselves, as they were expected to do.
y Meadows went on very satisfactorily with
artner till he ventured to be complimentary,
disquieted her extremely. She changed
nversation to the dance, to the company, to
usic, to the heat; and, in short, manœuvred
a very Marlborough to prevent her compa-

not care to disguise from him. I
menced a pursuit which he was too
to stumble in. He saw the game in
he had done many a time before, so
for its destruction ; yet apparently
less about his handsome partner as
different person in the room. This
of coldness, with a creature so then
impassioned, did all the mischief it
to do, and the reckless Sophy increa
to captivate one who had already th
pent coils around her heart.

Mary Bellenden was much less
tender impressions. Not that she
preciate the manly graces of Colonel
she was too familiar with the at
phere of vanity and folly to care
attentions, than she would ha

first adventure; but her nature was too good to be misled by such prepossessions. She had a marvellous idea of becoming a heroine; but then it must be one possessing all the perfections of all the most perfect ones of her acquaintance; and nothing less than a Prince Oroondates would content her.

Both Colonel Argyle and Philip Dormer addressed their partners in the style invented for and expected by particularly good looking young ladies at a ball having particularly good looking partners; but there was a decided difference in the manner of the two gentlemen. The Colonel expressed himself like a soldier and gentleman; in terms of admiration certainly, but there was a heartiness about it that bespoke a sincerity, and it was not allowed to express so much. The other was a courtier, with a courtier's manners, and a courtier's morals. His flatteries meant nothing; graceful and accomplished as he was, he was too calculating and too selfish to be sincerely in love, even with so divine a creature as his partner.

The gentlemen did not vary more in their addresses, than did the two ladies in the manner in which they received them. The daughter of Lord Bellenden sat down her companion's admi-

sian fascinations were best
her satisfaction was by no m
so splendid a theatre to disp
grand an audience.

Mary Lepel took the flat
panion as civilities natural
the place. She was pleas
ject of such graceful attent
enraptured with the sce
moved. Her partner fancied
that made her brilliant eyes
lustrous than they usually
his refined compliments and
tion ; and congratulated him

With such relations to ea
the fair schoolfellows and thei
concluded. In the next the

more freedom than good breeding introduced him to the reigning beauty. He lost no time in addressing himself to her, in a style he had reason to believe was irresistible, and seemed greatly disappointed when he found he was too late to engage her for the next dance. Consolation was offered his Grace in the hand of Fanny Meadows, whom he contrived before he parted with her to horrify nearly out of her wits by the extreme freedom of his manners, and the licentiousness of his sentiments.

In the meantime the select party at the top of the principal apartment were getting on rarely with their philosophical discussions. The German philosopher was as mystical, the French astronomer as transcendental, and the English Divine as spiritual as it was possible for them to be even in the presence of a Princess. They were extremely courteous, each shewing how he liked praise by the liberality with which he dispensed it to the other, which the latter felt bound to return with compound interest; nevertheless, either would have been inexpressibly glad had his associates been at the bottom of the Red Sea with mill stones securely fastened round their necks; for he was convinced he could have a much

one subject was likely to be exhausted. A fresh one, equally open to dispute, was the way they disposed of Free Will, Nature, Matter and Mind, and a few others that require a good deal of light to be understood. The Princess began to get a little tired of the company, and turned her attention towards the dancers, amongst whom she saw the lovely figures of her attendants, who were the object of her interest.

She was however getting listless. The Prince was amusing himself with the attractive guests in another apartment. The card-room was surrounded by cringing courtiers and sycophants. A shade of melancholy came over her. A shade of melancholy came over her handsome features; suddenly

of an extremely fair complexion and peculiarly feminine features ; his figure was also slight, and altogether he might have been mistaken for a very pretty girl in male attire. His dress there could be no doubt had been chosen with more than ordinary discrimination. There was evidence in the fashion, in the colour, and in the material of each portion of the costume, that shewed the wearer exercised a taste in such matters, of an extraordinary refined and ingenious character. His wig was the triumph of the perruquier's art, and must have cost some fifty guineas, if it cost a shilling ; his coat was a model, it sat upon him as if he had been born in it ; his waistcoat was a flower garden, a more delicate piece of work never passed from the tailor's hands ; his ruffles and linen were of a texture that would have charmed the heart of every spinster enamoured of such seriously fine fabrics ; his pearl-coloured stockings, his satin breeches, his diamond buckles, his sword, and well cut shoes were truly marvellous pieces of work. There was not so fine a gentleman in his Majesty's dominions.

The expression of his countenance was calm and dignified—a sense of greatness seeming to prevail over its somewhat too decided expression of

...gentle and pleasing
fully towards the Princess,
countenance and altogether
with which one sovereign we
with whom he was in amity.

"Ah, my Lord Hervey!"
cess, half rising from her se
tenance slightly flushed wi
glad I am to see you!"

Lord Hervey took the pro
of his own, which in whiten
with which it was adorned
He bent one knee, raised th
with an elegance worthy of so
man, and drawled out a few
words, in which honour and
servant, and Royal Highness
guishable.

college. In all matters respecting the dress and conduct of a gentleman his word was law and his decision indisputable ; but whilst thus reigning unchallenged the head and chief of the world's dandies, he was desirous his claims should consist of something besides attention to dress and deportment ; and he signalised himself by sayings and doings the most extravagantly macaroni-ish and effeminate that had ever been heard in England. He was an accomplished gentleman, a scholar, an excellent poet, and a brilliant ; but he seemed determined to make his talents subservient to the most extraordinary affectations that ever distinguished an empty-headed man. He was a man of high family, with aristocratic prejudices ; but took much pains to make the world believe that he prided himself infinitely more on being son and heir to the Earl of Bristol, than on being the best dressed man at Court ; for at Court he had determined to shine, and had there just commenced his career, with the appointment of Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales.

His words were very few, and affectedly epigrammatic, or marked by some startling inconsistency, absurdity, or foppishness ; and though they

... as those of El
and were just as likely to be qu

“ I am particularly glad to see
Royal Highness. “ Where hav
yourself all the time you have
us ?”

“ My rascal gave me a dami
chief; and as a natural consequ
confined to my chamber by a
the last three weeks,” answer
drawling “lack-a-daisy style, as ti
put him to an immense degree
utterance.

“ How shocking !” exclaimed
Princess, not exactly understand
the gentleman’s indisposition ;
Lordship is now convalescent.”

“ As well as can be expected,”

voracious — monstrous healthy, 'pon my veracity!"

"You are looking delicate, certainly," observed her Royal Highness, glancing at his extremely fair complexion; "but I should have thought a generous diet would have been more beneficial. I hope, however, you are strong enough to attend me. I particularly wish to introduce your Lordship to a lady."

"Is the lady presentable?" inquired the exquisite, with something extremely like disinclination in his countenance.

"She is the loveliest creature of all the King's lovely guests," replied the Princess, rising with a bow to her learned friends, as a sort of courteous dismissal of them. "We will go and find her out: I shall feel much gratified by your dancing with her."

"I never dance," said the beau determinedly. "Pon my veracity it is a monstrous deal too fatiguing an amusement for a man of fashion. The last ball, I ventured to stand up; but egad, I paid dearly for my folly; for after going through the first three bars of a minuet, I was so completely knocked up, I could'nt rise from my couch for a week after."

and at least accompany me th
should like to hear your Lord
young friend."

"Well, there can't be any
observed the gentleman, gra
so much of her Royal Highness
infinite condescension he follo
attending with the air of a pat
tions as they proceeded, and i
with the civility of a Prince, th
from those of his distinguished
nised him.

In the mean time Mary Lep
"Sir Roger de Coverley" with t
ton, who put forth all his pow
create a favourable impressio
partner. Never had his Grace
to be entertaining. He spoke

tried to excite his companion's curiosity by his descriptions of the marvels that were to be seen in town, from the Italian Opera to Mrs. Salmon's waxwork, and failed not to be equally eloquent in his notices of the Puppets, the Dumb Conjuror, and the Masquerade.

The Brigadier's daughter listened, apparently well pleased with the pains taken to amuse her. She had heard much of the wildness of the Duke of Wharton; but vice in high quarters was not then held in such reprobation as it deserved; and the Duke was an extremely handsome young man, very animated, and full of that conversational talent so agreeable to the fair sex. She did not sufficiently dislike him; and when with something like a tender solicitude he pressed her to accept his escort to the refreshment-room—she could not muster sufficient resolution to decline.

It was here when the pure-minded Mary Lepel was intently engaged receiving the civilities of the greatest libertine in town with an appearance of gratification, the Princess of Wales and Handsome Hervey approached; the former was not quite pleased to behold her young friend in such company—the latter did not at first notice the Duke. His attention was absorbed by the sylph-

almost affectionate, inter Honour to her Consort's Gent chamber. Whether his so late mination against dancing had quence of the very favourable graceful creature made on him, entirely lost sight of it, is not q it is when in a style that would great Duchess, Mary Lepel reception of the particularly fine gen cess had brought her, her curtsie as his bow, he in very courteous honour of joining her in a minutely signified her acquiescence back to the dancing-room, and Princess. The Duke of Wharton inclined to quarrel on this abominating partner; but he satisfied

the centre of the room, a circle was made round them by the other dancers, anxious to see the performance of two persons so celebrated.

Of all dances the true dance of the ball-room is the minuet. The country-dance is matchless among social dances; but for a couple who wish to have the amusement to themselves, there is nothing that will bear a moment's comparison with the minuet. It is peculiarly the dance of the polite world, requiring both birth and breeding for the due performance of its evolutions. It has been superseded by the meaningless quadrille, the twirling waltz, and half-a-dozen extravagant exhibitions in which a gentleman and a gentlewoman of the good old days, such as it took to go through a minuet properly, would have been ashamed of being seen engaged.

The minuet too, far more than any of its numerous rivals, is the dance devoted to the lover and his mistress. There is an air of refinement in its grace, and of sentiment in its motion, which is more consonant with the delicacy of true affection than the pully-hawly manœuvres so fashionable at the present day. Yes, there are dances in every country, and almost every description of season. Morris-dances, jigs, Highland flings,

And this was the general impression at the palace, as the music commenced its measured measure, and the very handsome well-dressed pair placed themselves to the dance. Certainly it was impossible to find amongst that gay and gallant couple so well matched. Handsome as he was acknowledged the best made and most accomplished man in his Majesty's dominions, and his slight shape and delicate features did not detract from Lepel either as regarded the advantage of her dress, or the unrivalled loveliness of her form and features, there could be no second opinion ; therefore there was not the least buzz of admiration this inconspicuous pair elicited amongst the crowd by whom they were encircled, as they glided through the midst of their performers.

ious Bothmar, and the Silenus ogle of the haughty Duke of Somerset; the leaden visage of the Prince of Wales, and the sensual gaze of the Duke of Wharton. There, too, the Duke of Buckingham's fubsy face was in close approximation to the Duke of Devonshire's double chin, and the yellow cheeks of shrivelled profligates crowded side by side with the plumper faces of youthful rakes.

The other sex also furnished its gazers in equal variety, from the wondering damsel looking on the scene as an earthly Heaven, to the antiquated dowager who pronounced it inconceivably beneath the consideration of any one who had seen how such things were done in her youthful days.

Handsome Hervey as he noticed the perfect grace with which his fair young partner began the first bars of the minuet, and the attention she and himself were exciting, appeared to shake off the foppish apathy which had hitherto marked his movements, and to throw all the refinement and elegance he had at his command, into the performance of his portion of the dance. He forgot the fatigue he had complained of; and never had he appeared to so much advantage. Even those who had most severely condemned his affectations

were, in spite of their prejudices, charmed into enthusiasm in his favour. Indeed the ladies spoke of him as something very little lower than an angel.

The Brigadier's daughter could not but remember how indifferently she had executed this dance before the dreaded Duchess of Marlborough; but her feelings now were very different. Proud of the absorbed attention she was exciting, proud of the acquisition of so distinguished partner, whom she was half inclined to admit was in a minuet an excellent substitute for the never-to-be-forgotten Prince Oroondates, proud of the position in which she was placed, a position which Cassandra, or Clelia, or Cleopatra, she was positive, could not but have been extremely pleased with, Mary Lepel threw her whole heart and soul into the performance in which she was engaged, and the result was that even in the stately court of Louis Quatorze never had so graceful a beauty trod the measures of that graceful dance. She floated over the boards like a creature of light; now retiring, now approaching, bending with winning humility, rising with admirable majesty till some of the enraptured spectators seemed to gaze with a sort of incredulity of her earthly

ture. How many hearts she gained by her matchless dancing it is quite impossible to calculate; but there was scarcely a male in the assembly who did not experience the most passionate admiration of her every movement.

The crowd had greatly increased : there was a vast congregation of lords of the bedchamber, grooms of the stole, equerries, and the other Court officials. The refreshment-rooms had been thinned, even the card-tables had given up more than half their occupants ; but a more attentive crowd could not have been found. Indeed, at the conclusion of the minuet they were so absorbed they noticed not the excitement that shook the frame of their sovereign, who had also become a gazer.

"Ah, God !" he muttered in German, as he turned from the scene, knocking his clenched fist against his forehead ; "just so she moved along with the handsome young Count when I first beheld her in her father's palace. Oh fool ! fool !"

The gavotte followed the minuet, and the hearts that had remained struggling against the fascinations of her slow movements, surrendered to the charm of the fair dancer's more lively but not more graceful evolutions. Never had a cou-

leaving so many ladies behind them. The ladies looked upon Fanny as an Apollo; the gentlemen amongst whom she was so long, is thoroughly enamoured of her. Had there been opportunity there would have been at least a hundred demonstrations of affection before the ball broke up.

"Fanny," whispered the discordant voice of the King's daughter, "we must get rid of this girl."

Fanny's father stopped as he was leaving the ball-room, and the yellowish tinge of his eyeballs showed a more than usual saffron, as he returned the glance of deadly hate that met his gaze.

"He is mine," he replied in the same low tones, "she shall be mine."

Mary Lepeur retired to her couch the happiest of the happy. The glories of a Court life seemed breaking upon her with more than meridian splendour. She fell asleep dreaming till late in the morning of grand Cyruses in velvet coats, and illustrious Bassas in brocaded vests; and more impressively than all, of dancing a minuet with the incomparable Prince Oroondates, in pearl-coloured stockings, and breeches of the most deli-

cate pink satin. In short, she was as well pleased as the most fortunate of heroines could be.

Little did she dream of the snares that surrounded her ; of the deadly hatred she had stirred up ; of the licentious hopes she had excited ; of the envy, malice, and lust, that her youthful beauty had called into action ; and of the numerous schemes for her destruction that had been plotted, entirely in consequence of the extraordinary impression she had created at the State Ball at St. James's.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HILL-TOP CLUB, AND THE MCHOCKS.

POETRY, A NIGHT'S REVERIES : II.

To see a weed that's like a man :

But 'tis a precious thing indeed,

To see a man so like a weed !

SMART.

THEATRE A reeking atmosphere of tobacco smoke it was scarcely possible, on a stranger's first entrance, to distinguish the individuals sitting round a long table well supplied with punch-bowls, glasses and candles, whose clay pipes were giving forth that dense volume of vapour that made their persons and the different objects around them so obscure. It was not till some moments' familiarity with the place enabled the spectator to discover by the struggling light of

the unsnuffed candles, that he was in the club-room of a tavern.

The walls possessed decorations peculiar to such places. There were the rules of the society over the heavy chimney-piece, supported on one side by a cock-fight, and on the other by a portrait of one of the heroes of Hockly-in-the-Hole. There was a Dutch drinking bout, a gaudy Bacchus and Ariadne, a flaunting Venus and Adonis, and several other pictures of a more questionable character distributed in various places with little order and less decency. A row of hats of different shapes hung upon pegs, with here and there a formidable stick with an ugly clump at the top.

The chairs were the usual substantial heavy things with hard leathern seats, and they were arranged or rather disarranged round the capacious table with a spittoon between every two. At the head of this table stood a cumbrous arm-chair raised above the level of the floor—the presidential seat, where the master of the revels or chairman took his station with a little hammer, to call attention by knocking on the table. Some people have imagined that the hammer was employed to bring the members to order: but as

21. Those chairs lounged in
careless attitudes imagining
King's faithful lieges—some
ledge of the table, some
legs thrown over the arms
with all members stretched
spread eagle; and who if the
of blackguards established
minions would have been in
highest degrees. They ce
alike, these black sheep of
there were nice shades in th
tiness, and very evident disti
evident profligacy; but one s
them in one brotherhood. I
rage against the ordinary
and against social order and
It was a club held by a ba

Their orgies were wilder than those of savages. Oaths, vile anecdotes, viler jests and ribald songs washed down with ample draughts of punch enjoyed in a murky cloud of tobacco smoke; with occasional interludes from forced performers, were the ordinary features of their evening symposia, till their senses became sufficiently maddened with their libations. Then they would rally out in a body, and commit such atrocities on the first unoffending passenger they chanced to meet as would become the town talk for a week.

Although such amusements, it might be thought, could be attractive only to the lowest, the most ignorant, and the most depraved of men, such was the extraordinary state of society at the date of our story, that it had become as much the fashion to get enrolled amongst this infamous coterie as it is at the present day to seek admission into the Conservative and Reform clubs; and persons of the very highest distinction—men even proud of their family, and some with pretensions to wit and learning, were content to associate with suspected highwaymen, cock-and-bottle captains, Fleet parsons, and disgraced lawyers, who were known to have found admittance into this respectable brotherhood. Profl-

seen heightened half the propriety in the days when Geo must now introduce the reamembers, some of whom he recognise as old acquaintances. chair sat the youngest and w community, the half drunk a Duke of Wharton; his face his person disguised in a flax man's coat—possibly to escape sibly as a freak of fancy; but question of his identity. The edly the Lucifer of that Pand

Next him sat a man of w terribly misled by a thoughtle a foolish daring, to disgrace his able associates. He had on old Chelsea pensioner but the

scene had not all sense of shame long departed from them, and had they not become used to follies so inconsistent with their time of life. The lean man, whose loss of teeth drew in his mouth like a sewn up button hole, though he wore a patch that half concealed his face, and had got on a huntsman's coat and riding wig, with stockings over his knees, was no other than the proud Duke of Somerset. His Grace could never be brought to acknowledge the acquaintance of humble men of good character—for a prouder man than the proud Duke of Somerset did not exist;—but misled by a vicious fashion and his own licentious disposition, he was here hail fellow well met with some of the most notorious rakes and bullies about town: trusting to his disguise to 'preserve him from any inconvenient familiarity with persons whom he chose to consider his inferiors.

His opposite neighbour, so conspicuous with the green spectacles and flabby cheeks, though he passed for a physician, was John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham; a nobleman who had distinguished himself in the world of letters, though it might be said he had used the Muses in the derogatory employment of go-betweens, in affairs from which

years, enjoyed a name for gallantry were extremely desirous to maintain him, in the Quaker suit, was the Dutton—another of these old gallants— a younger man in a full bottomed a counsellor's gown, who was Ather.

At the other end of the table was a lot to whom disguise seemed quite necessary. Many were of broken fortunes, whose finery too readily betrayed. Some were with needy younger brothers and runaways who did not disdain putting them in creditable shifts to enable them to pass themselves after their own fashion. It had been said of some that they were prejudiced, and would not object to

and betraying women, equally worthy
in elevation.

At the other end of the table was a tall, thick
bald, pale complexioned man, whose hawk-
like countenance was handsomely set off with a
crop of little red pimples, which if they
added to his beauty could have taken little
notice of it had it happened to be in that state of
decay which vanity itself could not have
driven out of. He wore a sort of laced
coat, rather the worse for wear, and bore
a military title which assuredly could not
be better for the use he put it to. This
was extremely well known about town,
and in the purlieus of Covent Garden. To
day he had been kicked out of Will's, as it
was likely he had been out of many other
places; and his nose had been pulled in
and out—but that member doubtless owed its
condition to the frequency with which it had
been handled. Nevertheless, for a cock-and-
pistol captain, Captain Spatterdash was a most
able person.

He was supported on his right by a sallow
yellow-headed fellow, with a pug nose and
a most pugnacious expression of countenance,

nation to do himself. No one could well as Bully Swag. He was not at trifles; he would do his job, however it might be, in the most perfect manner possible, and without pure love of mischief either to lead in the performance of any atrocity which a fire club might think it necessary to

On his left was a round red face, a night-cap, the body belonging to it being in a clergyman's rusty frock, and the owner of this apparel was as well known in Fleet Street, as the giants at St. Dunstons Parson Fuddle;—a choice specimen of a priest, which we trust has become scarce in these islands:—a swearing, swaggering profligate, who knew little of the religion he professed to be a minister and

the great Counsellor Quibble :—a limb of the law worthy of a high place in the devil's chancery ; and esteemed above all his learned brethren as standing counsel of a community of which the Duke of Wharton was President.

In addition to the members we have named there was Tom Pepper, and Jack Wildair, and Dick Rumpus, and a few others of less note, who had not distinguished themselves so prominently as to call for particular description—were mere common-place scapegraces, to whom it is not necessary we should further allude.

While we have been sketching this much celebrated club, those inestimable members of society of which it was formed were conducting themselves in that peculiarly riotous and disorderly manner, so characteristic of their revelries, or devilries. Laughing, shouting, singing, swearing, mingled together in one uproarious saturnalia ; and the vapour still continued to rise from their mouths, and the punch still continued to fall down their throats, as the night wore on. Bacchanalian chorusses were succeeded by political ballads, and amorous ditties by maccaronic songs ; and sometimes two or more went on together, and not unfrequently a racy speech, or a licentious anecdote

A fresh supply of punch had been
amid the shouts and noisy mirth of them
and at both ends of the table an animation
was being carried on, of which the prominent
feature chanced to be the oatmeal
dry with which it was seasoned. At
one end Parson Fuddle was holding an argument
Counsellor Quibble, on the merits of
from the purlieus of old Drury. Catterdash
having been appealed to, had to know a great
deal more about the disputants were inclined
to allow, where Bully Swag to join in the
argument pretty good authority in such cases
extensive acquaintance with ladies of
fashion. But this might also be said of
his associates; and knowing themselves
especially qualified to take their share in
the dispute, Tom Pepper, Jack Wildair, and

dalous anecdotes ; of narratives of boasted
is ; and of accounts of successful intrigues.
unger members, such as the Duke of
n, and Anthony Lowther, were not re-
le for modesty ; but they were completely
wed by the self-exalting stories volunteered
antiquated Dukes of Somerset, Bucking-
rd Kingston. Amongst them the female
er was shockingly bespattered ; and no one
ave imagined that the Lady Babs, and the
ueloves, and the Kitty Clovers, and the
less other maids, wives, and widows, then
re mentioned by these worthies, could
ed so little virtue as appeared from what
d against them.

be height of the discussion, when every
r appeared in the fifth heaven of self-com-

.

“Dare-devils!—fire-eaters!—bloody
of metal!” exclaimed the Duke, a
hurricane of knockings at the tall
noisy demonstrations of favour. “
that your President at every meeting
some new beauty whose charms are
worthy of such an honour.”

“A deuced good system, strike
said the apparent Chelsea pensioner
away seriously at his long clay pipe

“And at the same time,” continued
“some member should engage to speak
within a limited time; which if he fails
shall be accounted a milk-sop, an idler,
and no longer fit for the composition
of spirit.”

“Capital law! have often fulfilled
aimed the Duke of Buckingham

gain back the years in which I have thus signalized myself."

"I don't see any harm in such a law," said the Duke of Kingston. "It is at once like dealing in musk and ambergrease:—both pleasant and profitable."

"Full glasses, and be hanged to you!" cried the President authoritatively, as he glanced along the table on both sides. "Let your punch be strong and hot, like your blood. I propose for your toast, a beauty more ravishing than any mind the most familiar with women can conceive."

"Smash me—but she must be a rare one!" exclaimed Parson Fuddle.

"Is every member ready?" asked the Duke of Wharton, observing that each had his full glass of punch before him.

"All!—all!" exclaimed different voices.

"Here's to the matchless Molly Lepel!" exclaimed the Duke, standing up with the glass in his hand. "And may all who fail to join me in the toast, be rammed, crammed, jammed, and d—d; grilled, broiled, fried, and pitchforked; toasted, roasted, stewed, and barbacued, to all time and eternity, and as much longer as may be convenient, then and ever after, amen."

with the same solemnity. Then followed a shower of applause, and a loud knocking making a din that defies description.

“I rise, Mr. President,” exclaimed the Duke of Buckingham as soon as the riot subsided, and he claimed that the usual period be allowed him for gaining possession of the income—”

“No; I’ll be hanged if you shall,” cried the Duke of Somerset, rising hastily, and addressing his associate. “This is an honor which I lay my heart upon. I hope our brother will not draw his pretensions. I am determined to have her, curse me! and will leave no effort untried to obtain so glorious a prize.”

“Ah, Squire; are you there?” cried the Duke of Devonshire, most obedient, “cried the Duke of Devonshire, sarcastically, half incoherently. “You

“to add another competitor. Even I, the President of the Hell-fire Club, and Emperor of the Mohocks, have determined to take my chance !”

This announcement was received with uproarious applause.

“Every one to his taste,” said the Duke of Kingston ; “but I’m for the lovely Bellen-den.”

“And I for the ravishing Sophy Howe !” cried Anthony Lowther ; “and I’ll wager a cool hundred I am the first to secure my conquest.”

“Done, done, done !” eagerly said the enamoured noblemen, and instantly each made bets, backing his own powers of seduction against those of his adversaries. Another bowl of punch was called in, and other toasts given, and the spirits of the licentious crew were rising higher and higher ; and their boastings over the sex, and satisfaction in their own wild excesses, louder and more extravagant every minute.

It was difficult to say which end of the table was noisiest, or which most enthusiastic ; the admirers of the Maids of Honour of the Princess of Wales, or the friends and supporters of the frail favourites in the popular establishment of Mother Bang. In short the members of the club

no one could be pronounced as possessing pretensions to be considered orderable, their youthful President certainly a superiority in the common qualities which shewed how truly deserving the distinguished place he held amongst

A new impulse was given to them by the sudden influx into the room of rakish-looking, half-intoxicated young men, whose persons however were well known to the whole club; for they were greeted with a shout of welcome, and with oaths and execrations of the most amiable character. It was not perceived that the new comers brought a message to them; but at last the President's eye was directed to a personage in a half-

different languages, they neither appeared to be understood nor appreciated.

The leader of his captors, for it soon appeared he was a prisoner, in a humourous speech, too full of impieties to be transferred to this work, made their President, whom they addressed as "his imperial highness Muley Anthropophagus, Emperor of the Mohocks," acquainted with their having had the honour of meeting, close to their place of meeting, that illustrious and estimable Court favourite, so well known on the Back-stairs of St. James's by the name of Mustapha the Turk; and knowing the great desire the emperor and the rest of the Mohocks had to be acquainted with that influential friend and follower of his Majesty, they, in the gentlest and most affectionate manner possible, forced him into the imperial presence.

Mustapha hardly knew what to make of the strange-looking group by whom he was surrounded; but the name of the Mohocks filled him with dread, as it would have done at the time any other quietly disposed person. The Turk, however, had other causes of fear. He knew the little love the English entertained for the foreigners the King had brought into their

for he was assailed on all sides with might have found it extremely difficult touching certain proceedings in the he had fancied could not be known walls.

He turned bewildered from one side to another as each attacked him; and the questions, made singular and incoherent and seemed greatly to amaze his audience. The queries related to the King's misdeeds were of a peculiarly private character. Mustapha strove to evade them, or to deny their force; but he was soon so pressed and harassed, that he was forced into giving answers to this catechism, which he would have been enough to have made in the hearing of the ladies alluded to. Then the King found himself obliged to do

very far from being agreeable either to Turk or Christian.

His examination, however, did not last very long, though it seemed to excite an immense deal of amusement; for the Duke of Wharton, in his double capacity of Emperor of the Mohocks, and President of the Hell-Fire Club, rose, and in a remarkably soothing speech, assured the alarmed Mahometan that he ought to feel at home, as he was surrounded by fellows who were undoubtedly "as great Turks as himself," and that he and all of them felt so much respect for him personally, that they were in one mind to prove to him before he departed, how much they felt inclined to place him *above themselves*.

Mustapha was about, with a great deal of gratitude, to return thanks for the honour they were inclined to do him; but on a telegraphic communication from their chairman, the members at the lower end of the table rose from their seats. Captain Spatterdash, with a cordial execration, begged the honour of Mr. Mustapha's company in the garden; Bully Swag, with a most friendly oath, requested permission to accompany him: Counsellor Quibble and Parson Fuddle then presented themselves to pay their respects,

The Page of the Back-stairs advances as so many compliments, and in his acknowledgments. The window back of the room were found to open a considerable piece of garden ground; company had there arrived, whilst his attention, others were busily at a little distance lighting several links of the chain, so dark to see clearly without them. One of the strongest of the party had thrown the ground an immense blanket with sail cloth.

When everything was prepared, he felt much more easy in his mind in consequence of the courteous attentions he had received. He was invited to try the softness of the cushions of honour they had been spreading for him in true Oriental fashion. He

himself high in the air, falling down with an alarming velocity into a blanket stretched out to receive him by several pairs of powerful arms.

In vain he shrieked, swore, prayed, threatened, and entreated, in Turkish, Arabic, German, French and English; up he went in the air amid the deafening shouts of the assembled Mohocks, many of whom stood smoking their pipes, and enjoying the scene to their heart's content, whilst others held up the lighted flambeaux to throw as much light as possible on a scene so picturesque. Such a medley of Turkish prayers, German abuse, French oaths, and English promises, never was heard before. The disturbance caused many of the neighbouring windows to be thrown open; and when these spectators were told that one of the King's Turks was being tossed in a blanket, they seemed to enjoy the jest as much as those who were acting it, and encouraged his summer-acts with a vast deal of critical judgment.

At last the strong arms^o of the operators at the blanket wearied of their labour, and after giving "a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether," which appeared to send the unfortunate Mahometan half-way on his road to Paradise, they allowed him to regain his legs more dead

running with a speed he had never
The dreaded Mohocks, however,
their hats, and sallied after him
and hallooing like a pack of ravenous
a stray horse. He fled, screaming
"Mohocks! Mohocks!" which was
to clear the streets of their path
darted into houses, or disappeared in
courts as fast as they could.

On rushed the young Duke of
his wild and reckless followers at him
a watchman crossed his path, and
came within sight; in fact the Duke
be deserted, till the troop suddenly
the perfumer's at the corner of I
ings came upon a sedan, the Duke
had fled on hearing that cry of
Mohocks! Mohocks!

These Hanoverians were always fair game, and little ceremony was used with the Count, notwithstanding he went on his knees in the most abject manner and prayed for mercy.

"A sweat, a sweat !" cried a dozen voices ; and in a moment out flashed as many swords, the points of which were applied to the calves of the suppliant's legs and other fleshy parts of his body in a manner that made him yell and bound like a madman. This extraordinary agility was received with shouts of applause by his tormentors, whose weapons again goaded him till he screamed with the pain ; they then proceeded to "tip him the lion," and to perform other tricks for which they had become celebrated. The blood was streaming through his stockings, and the perspiration rolled down his face in hot drops as he jumped about, and shouted, and prayed, and cursed by turns ; till maddened by an unexpected application of a sword's point to his hind quarters, he made one desperate plunge forward, broke through the pitiless Mohocks and fled with the speed of the wind.

"Now for Mother Bang's !" exclaimed the young Duke, and with a fresh chorus of yelling and screeching, the whole party rushed along the

treme of fashion as if they had
at the palace, with patches on
gay head-dresses with top-knots
and having fans in their hands.

One of the ladies embraced
a lively oath, and the other
upon the Duke as if she intended
swearing most lustily it was so
set eyes on him, she was afraid
but the gentlemen so honour
express how much they liked
their associates dashed up with
savages ; and Jenny Diver and
with the Duke and the Pars
with the rush, and very shortly
joining in the shouting, and so
vociferous greetings of welcome
about a dozen

CHAPTER VII.

OUR HEROINE AT ST. JAMES'S.

So powerful her charms and so moving,
They would warm an old Monk in his cell,
Should the Pope himself ever go roaming,
He would follow dear Molly Lepel.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

Our Maids of Honour were by this time in the full enjoyment of a Court life ; were becoming as familiar with their duties as with their associates ; and were as much at home in St. James's as they had been in the paternal domicile. Indeed, it might be said of Sophy Howe, that she was too much at home in the palace, for she behaved with a freedom that often scandalised her best friends ; flirting with every gentleman who approached her, from the Prince to his

possession of youth and animal spirits, her bright blavoking lustre that attracted every handsome fellow who was at Court. They rivalled her the most devoted attention and enraged them all by not greatly to favour one, and the rival.

Nothing was known of moral; but a great deal that was tolerated in an age when it was allowed to women of quality to do what too many of the House seemed to glory in as most improper things; but the virtuous persons chose to think of doing others as they pleased.

ually with them all; but Anthony Low-
not amongst them. He kept at a sort
biting distance, and though she seemed
his indifference, she only smiled the
the well satisfied captives she held in

Meadows though growing more familiar
t manners, was not to be reconciled to
freedoms many gentlemen of the Court
proper to take with her; and did all she
he assumption of a solemn and dignified
r to keep such persons at a due distance.
duct was remarked by the gay spirits
unded her, and it often created consi-
nusement when a fair occasion offered
ing it. She also had declared suitors,
eared as though they only assumed that
to afford entertainment to the rest of

bellenden appeared to be proceeding
most intense satisfaction. She soon
vident she had not been to Paris for
or she exhibited extraordinary talent in
er in which she retained around her
ent gallants her Parisian graces had
r to fascinate. Colonel Argyle, how-

, never more on
not understand the encou
to afford to the advances o
Kingston, and the attent
coarse and awkward gallan
Wales. The honest soldier
this, and often held aloof fr
remove his affections to safe
Bellenden's daughter was
Frenchwoman to permit
escape from her fascination.
contrived by some well time
within their sphere; and thi
obliged to free herself from
tries of his rivals.

But "Molly Lepel," as st
styled, seemed the happiest
her fair school-fellows; and.

never tired of giving her good advice respecting the behaviour of the gentlemen of the Court ; and when in the presence of her "good Howard," her Royal Highness would warn her against the attentions of such gentlemen, who it was not decorous to encourage ; she of course alluding to the gallantries of her lord, and reminding her conscience-stricken bedchamber woman of the sin she had committed in accepting the Prince's attentions : a species of punishment she never failed to inflict at every favourable opportunity.

The good Princess then, if not inclined to dilate upon philosophy, would break forth into the warmest encomiums on the nobleman she had introduced to the young Maid of Honour on the night of the State Ball ; representing him as a model of everything that was graceful and refined in manhood. The Brigadier's daughter was, to tell the truth, rather more amused than enraptured by the affectations of Handsome Hervey, and could scarcely help laughing when the image of that extremely refined beau with all his affectations, rose before her mind ; nevertheless she was not ill-pleased by his demeanour towards her, nor uninfluenced by the access of fame bestowed upon her in consequence of his attentions. After dancing the

for a Maid of Honour sh
very plain.

His opinion, characteri
great way in her favour,
the civil speeches and tes
cured her. Handsome H
be thrown a good deal into
descended occasionally to c
on being interrogated by h
rers as to his opinion of he
as to allow that he might b
of her sex less rational in th

Notwithstanding the p
Handsome Hervey enjoyed
tremely refined approaches
the brilliant manœuvres and
heroine's more active admir
this list. a matter and

fore which his force appeared. He seemed satisfied that a creature so inexperienced must become an easy prey.

Philip Dormer had recourse to different tactics. He was graceful and pleasant, studied the lady's tastes, flattered her prejudices, employed the most delicate flattery, and left nothing which could reach the heart or turn the head of so youthful a beauty.

The Dukes of Buckingham and Somerset were no in the field, as they often were rivals in affairs of gallantry, and they brought with them forces on which great reliance had always been placed ; but chief reliance was on vanity, that weak corner of fortifications of female chastity. They had a powerful competitor in the Prince of Wales, who seemed desirous of possessing the fortress by striking it in the same direction. He was, however, far too clumsy in his proceedings to excite any apprehension.

There was yet another rival, though a secret one : as unknown in that character to the Maids of Honour as to the throng of courtly worshippers who crowded round her wherever she appeared, though the admiration she openly drew from them was not without danger to

dogged her steps to Kensington, her at the ring, watched her accompanied her in all her strolls and visits from one part of

The King's mistresses had eyes that made their ugliness the immense impression contrast at Court of the young Princess of Wales; but the Mary Lepel had made on them and their hatred that might on her companions was common. Many an important consultation Mademoiselle Schulenburg of all the principal Hanoverians and they were unanimously impressed by the Brigadier's declaration.

disputed, and that bulky mass of garbage, her obsequious associate, was well inclined to echo her sentiments.

Their male companions were equally interested in the question. Baron Bothmar was as callous as a Spanish inquisitor. Count Bernstorff still smarting from the rough treatment he had received at the hands of the Mohocks, would readily have volunteered to play the office of executioner to any one who belonged to the country of his tormentors ; and Count Robethon had too much *esprit de corps* not to be equally incensed against the formidable Maid of Honour.

Even the Turks their faithful allies were not less violent than themselves. It has been said that a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind ; and the sympathy of the tossed and frightened Page of the Back-stairs, with the goaded and maddened Private Secretary, gave the same revengeful colouring to the thoughts of the two infidels as existed in the meditations of each of their Christian confederates.

The relationship between father and son was not now more amicable, nor could it be said to have become more belligerent. The fact was, the Princess was approaching her confinement, and

explosions of temper which continually provoked. The Hanoverian friends did not were extremely desirous of a desire which in his sentiment and irritability, and to the paternal censure, it could be little difficulty in a

Their calculations, however disappointed; the King, it more uneasy respecting the disquietude, and at last confidential counsellor, Baron J embassy to Hanover; the believed to be connected much mystery in the B nothing in the slightest degree allowed to transpire.

started violently at any sudden noise, would be inattentive to the speeches of his ministers, and regardless of the attentions of his friends ; was restless when alone, and when in company acted as though he was in the privacy of his own cabinet. Yet all this time he was particularly careful of saying or doing anything that might alarm his daughter-in-law ; this forbearance however, was far from being universal, for he frequently indulged in the most violent outbursts of passion against any person not connected with her who happened to offend him.

The King's mistresses finding the moment not propitious to their views, waited with the patience of revenge for a favourable opportunity. In due time the Princess was confined ; and it was reported both child and mother were "as well as could be expected." Mademoiselle Schulenburg and Madame Kielmansegge thought it high time to be doing. After many consultations it was considered that there was only one available plan for putting an end to the unaccountable fancy of their royal master for the youthful Maid of Honour, and this was to drive the Prince and his family out of the palace. To this object they now directed their strenuous endeavours.

ties which such a connexion might
of offence as if one had been
other a vestal.

To give a correct idea of the
of these interviews, the reader must
customary hour of meeting arrive
ladies in full dress, or more or
undress, sitting in their usual place
employments. The tall, bony figure
favourite, closely resembling one
spectral figures in the Danish
apparently motionless with a
devotion in her hand, and a look
ed hypocrisy on her face. Her chair
convenient distance from a table containing
nothing but some paper and a pair
to the table was a vacant *fautouil* in

At a little distance behind the

and after enjoying herself thoroughly with the Schiedam, she had taken a book of religious discourses; but sleep had so completely triumphed over her affectation of piety, that it had been agreed she should affect industry, and she was now found employing herself in knitting comforters and night-caps.

Mademoiselle Schulenburg looked off her book to glance at her watch; the hand was on the very minute of the hour, and almost as soon as she made this discovery a slight knock was heard at the door; another instant it opened; the ladies rose, the Turkish Pages of the Back-stairs entered backwards, bearing branch silver candlesticks with wax lights; at a due distance appeared the ungainly figure and stolid physiognomy of the King, in his ordinary snuff-coloured suit, marching awkwardly after them; and a couple of Grooms of the Stole in their costly liveries, brought up the rear, but did not cross the threshold. A wave of the hand dismissed the attendants. The door closed on Messrs Mustapha, Mahomet and Co. The mistresses curtseyed, the royal Adonis stalked on to the vacant chair, and sat himself down. The Venuses as silently resumed their seats.

Those who imagined that the royal profligate

King without a word took
table in one hand, and th
and became intently emp
various figures—an art rare
but in the nursery. Mad
was equally absorbed in her
fingers of Madame Kielman
with her taskwork with as
they formed a part of a cle

This went on in a profoun
by any other sounds than th
the rustle of the leaves, an
knitting needles. Etiquette
apartment most rigidly : nei
ture to speak until the King
Maypole" sat as silent and r
as prepossessing, as the skele

to give her fat arms a comfortable stretch. The clip of the scissors went steadily on, as if they were the ceaseless instrument in the hands of Fate for abbreviating human life; and they were multiplied as systematically as if the manufacturer had been called upon to supply an extraordinary demand.

One Kielmansegge would have much rather have a glass of her favourite wine, than to the comfortable specimen of needlework she was so busily labouring at. Miss Schulenburg kept her peace and her patience by consoling herself with the recollection of the large sum she had made by South Sea and with the agreeable prospect that awaited her of getting rid of her dangerous rival.

When the King began to mutter to himself as he was cutting a group of ladies out of the tapestry and at the sound, his gaunt mistress was more mindful of her organs of sight than of those of her hands, whilst her stout companion was called by it to join in the very middle of an undeniable nod which she had found herself unable to resist. He proceeded to nothing but broken sentences, and his companions found it difficult to interpret what he presently they assumed a meaning that

the of these telegraphic too.
how to practise.

" 'Twas only a dream !" I

Another look of secret in
tween the confederates.

" Yet 'twas awful ! I saw
broad day. The Count wit
dropping blood. It was a d
maintained his innocence.
slaughtered in the dark to
of a worthless harlot."

The two ladies looked w
each other.

" Then she came with her
the deed, reproaching me fo
and accusing me of cruelty
worst vices that could disg
demanded back her youth,

opinion of this announcement to her faithful friend; and Madame Kielmansegge telegraphed back her own sentiments on the same important point. The King again relapsed into a silence, only disturbed by a sigh or a groan, and the unceasing click of the royal scissors. Presently on finishing a new group of ladies in well-spreading petticoats, his lack-lustre eyes were raised from his occupation, and glanced round the apartment.

"Ah, my dear friend!" he exclaimed in German, on observing the ill-favoured favourite nearest to him, "I am glad to see you; and the Kielmansegge too," he added, observing the other, who was now wide awake. "I am glad to see the Kielmansegge."

The two old harridans rose from their seats and made a profound reverence; then the superior in a hypocritical snuffle, made a hundred inquiries respecting the health of her royal visitor; and her fat friend in a more humble tone opened the cavity in her immense face to express inquiries equally fervent and equally sincere. Then a little social chat commenced:—the old ladies amused their lover with the gossip of the palace, sometimes opening upon subjects of deeper inte-

The recent addition to the royal family formed one of the subjects treated in the little *coterie*; and the ceremony of christening was dwelt upon by both ladies with great emphasis. They were well aware that the king had already arranged the ceremony, and had appointed sponsors to the infant; and their wits to work to induce the King to perform the ceremony into his own hands, and appoint himself, which they as sovereigns were bound to do, as the sovereign and his family.

George I. was not at all inclined to interfere himself about the christenings of his children; but as it was insisted it was necessary he should, he gave directions for the ceremony, and according to the directions of his advisers appointed himself and

The gossip having concluded, the ladies proceeded to business ; they had sundry little favours to ask for themselves, and sundry little commissions to execute for their friends—the unpre-
suming adjective in both instances involving gains to the amount of several thousands. They both went to work in a style that showed a vast experience in the art and science of wheedling. Having got all they could think of, they next proceeded to induce the King to grant immediate and private audiences to such of his subjects who sought to gain the King's favour through the powerful medium of the King's mistresses. This also was quickly conceded ; and in a very few minutes the gracious sovereign was granting an interview to some adventurer, whose only recommendation lay in the many bribes with which he had purchased the influence of these faded beauties.

The monarch having cut through all his paper, looked at his watch, and rose to depart. The ready Pages were at the same moment in the apartment walking backwards towards the door with the waxlights ; the favourites rivalled each other in the humility of their obeisances, as the King with a slight salutation stalked out of the

The King's determination was known to the Prince of Wales by a particularly qualified to make the most occasion of quarrel, and much stress so arbitrary an act as interfering with privileges and wishes. The Prince wanted little exciting. He put him into a violent rage, and declaimed who would hear him, on the integrity of his father—swore as stoutly have no Duke of Newcastle, against well known he was particularly pious godfather to his child ; and finished orders for the christening of the infant to the previous arrangement, much any one had anticipated it could take

The Prince was so indignant, that

tions for the approaching ceremony. The Princess was at first for delay ; but finding her husband bent on braving the royal authority she could not avoid sharing in the offence.

The day of the christening came :—it was performed in the palace in the Princess's private apartment ; and a strong muster of the Prince's friends of both sexes had been collected to do honour to the ceremony. Amongst them were the usual attendants of the Court Beauties, each pursuing his own game, and completely satisfied with the hand he held. Then there was the Duchess of Bolton rich in blunders as in brogue—a source of continual entertainment to those around her. The Duchess of Marlborough had also thought proper to attend, as she said, out of respect for the Princess ; but the Brigadier General Lepel happened also to be amongst the invited, and some of the witty rogues present were so daring as to attribute her re-appearance at Court to the attractions of her gallant lover. Nothing but the civilities of the old beau could have drawn her away from the delightful squabbles she was engaged in with Sir John Vanbrugh, the architect of Blenheim, whose services she could not be brought to recompense.

rough, the Dukes of Buckingham and the Duke of Kingston and Lord Bell each other in the pungency of their were the ladies of the party less brilliant. Lepel was piquant, Lord Bellende overflowing with Parisian vivacity, charmingly saucy, and Mrs. Howard good-humoured.

The Princess sat apart, as usual, distant from the discussions between her little knot of disputants, the endless gossip of the vonshire, and the superlative elegance of some Hervey. A shade of seriousness perceptible on her handsome countenance, whether it was occasioned by any misgiving of her Consort's somewhat daring excursion from the mysticism of the metaphysics she had just been listening to, or from

a careless freedom to all the younger ladies, cracking jokes no one else could have ventured upon, and expressing compliments which it was equally impossible any one else would have risked. His broken English, and his boisterous laugh resounded through the apartment, and his appreciation of his own superior cleverness in outwitting his father was as excessive as it was genuine.

The Brigadier's daughter was the centre of a brilliant group of admirers, prominent among whom was the ardent and impassioned Duke of Wharton; the assiduous and graceful Philip Dormer less publicly pursued his more able policy; and the veteran Dukes brought all their experience to disconcert the advances of their young rivals, and secure their own. The lovely Maid of Honour had some difficulty in apportioning to each of her suitors the exact degree of attention they deserved.

The intelligence of his son's daring defiance of the royal authority had been carried to the King, and it produced such a prodigious outburst of passion, that his most confidential attendants were afraid to go near him. His Majesty was with difficulty restrained from darting in upon the Prince and his associates, and punishing them all on the spot for

gay as they could be, and the Princess resounded with the bursts of laughter the brilliant sallies of the Wits at Maids of Honour had lost sight of the sessions they had entertained, when engaging the secret preparations for this of independence, and were among the laughers, and readiest jesters present. Meadows allowed herself to appear and the Prince addressed to her some ludi- cation respecting the antediluvian cro- had so fascinated his father.

The Duchess of Marlborough was sa- rized by the glaring absence of etiquette ed in the pleasantry going on around her was so fully employed in narrating to the the history of her disputes with the :

The Duchess of Bolton in another part of the room was entertaining a select circle, among whom were Sophy Howe, and the elderly Dukes, by enacting the part of a fortune-teller, in which she displayed so much broad humour, mingled with sly allusions and shrewd guesses, as exceedingly diverted her laughing audience.

Handsome Hervey, more finished even than usual in his appearance, had excited the astonishment of many of his admirers by the extreme refinement of his language, whenever he made the exertion of uttering an observation. The ladies fully appreciated the distinction of being addressed by him. Mary Lepel, however, regarded him with more curiosity than interest. She knew his fame, and was not inattentive to his presence, but failed to exhibit that eagerness to obtain his notice which some of her companions so frequently displayed. Perhaps it was this indifference that caused the Exquisite to approach her, and then detained him in her neighbourhood. He listened to her enthusiastic account of the heroic deeds of Prince Oroondates, which she was detailing to the attentive Philip Dormer; and though he doubted the possibility as well as the propriety of any well bred gentleman enduring such prodigious fatigue,

the most refined breeding to attend rival Hercules in his labours.

Every member of this gay assembly occupied, and seemed as completely happy as possible for a courtier to be, when in the general enjoyment the folding door of the apartment suddenly opened, and the entrance of the Chambers announced "Count Bertram." The electric shock could not have produced a more startling effect upon the company than the entrance of the hang-dog countenance of this generally detested doer of dirty work. King.

He advanced with a cringing bow, and a smiling smile; yet an air of affected confidence was visible upon his countenance, which did the pleasant party no good. There was

not been sufficiently discreet in accepting the invitation of the Princess.

"Well, rascal!" shouted the Prince in German, "what ill wind blew thee to a place where thy discreditable company is so unwelcome?" If there was one of his father's counsellors his son particularly detested, it was his unexpected visitor; and good reason he had for his detestation.

"I feel deeply grieved, your Royal Highness, to be the bearer of ill-tidings—"commenced the Count in a whining voice.

"Hold thy accursed croaking, thou filthy carrion-crow, and at once explain the cause of this intrusion," exclaimed the Prince.

"And am no less concerned at having fallen under your Royal Highness's displeasure," added the intruder with a more cringing bow, and a more apologetic whine.

The irritated Prince advanced two steps, no doubt with the intention of kicking the fellow out of the room; but he checked himself. "Go on, rascal, finish and begone!" he cried.

"I am honoured by his Majesty's commands," continued the Count, a gleam of spite shewing itself in the fear his chalky countenance expressed, "I am honoured by his Majesty's commands," he falteringly repeated, "to inform your Royal High-

craven before him, and driven
the door. At this critical mom
upon his arm—it was that of th
may, affright, and indignation
of all the company; but the Pr
she became aware of the errant
storf, had glided towards her b
touch and a look checked the
that might have led to mischie
and the Count.

“ You must surrender your
the King’s messenger,” said her
in a low voice.

“ My sword !” thundered t
good sword is not to be pollute
such a traitor !”

Lord Peterborough urged the

French, as he unsheathed his sword, "take this weapon to yonder ill looking hound; if the King had sent his shoe-black on such an errand, I should not have thought so much of the disgrace; but let what may follow of this outrage upon the heir apparent of the British throne, take care that it never passes from that rascal's dirty hands into mine."

The Prince gave one withering look towards the trembling minister of his father, and then turned his back upon him. Philip Dormer took the weapon with an appearance of great devotion, and walked from his enraged master to the place where Count Bernstorff stood waiting to receive it, as if with a full sense of the importance of the charge. He was conscious that the eyes of all except the Prince were upon him, waiting in anxiety and alarm the conclusion of the strange scene.

Count Bernstorff was not ill pleased in having the opportunity of humbling the son of his sovereign, though in no small alarm at the prospect he had had of a severe and signal punishment for his manifold treacheries. Still he was in a state of considerable apprehension, partly occasioned by the severe shock he had lately received from the

had so dreadfully punished him, his elbow.

Philip Dormer had approached King's messenger, when as if by a the sword drop at the Count's feet of the steel disturbed the timid man but anxious to conclude his unplea remove himself to safer quarters, stooped down to recover the weapon moment, the Earl of Peterborough was known to miss an opportunity trick, let the place be where it might raised the alarming cry of "Mohock

"Mohocks!" echoed the Duke of the same humour.

"A sweat, a sweat!" shouted the Buckingham and Somerset.

to the door, opened it and rushed out, upsetting two of the yeomen of the guard stationed in the antechamber.

The alarm of the christening party changed at once to mirth, and some of the more reckless of the wits resumed their pleasant jests and gossipings, as if nothing had occurred to disturb their entertainment; but there were others who looked grave, and anticipated more decisive measures. The King, however, in a few hours thought proper to withdraw the arrest; but he sent an order for the Prince with his family and attendants to quit the palace, appointing Leicester House, a large mansion in Leicester Fields for his residence.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DARING ABDUCT

Old Orpheus, that husband so civ
He followed his wife down to h
And who would not go to the de
For the sake of dear Molly Lej

LORD CHES

GREAT confusion existed at 'Lei
within a few weeks of the removal
of Wales from the palace. It is t
confusion had existed there ever
apparent had made it his residence
King and his angry son were in a
warfare; the former to mark his ho

Notwithstanding this disgrace, the Prince and Princess had many staunch friends, and a very respectable independent Court they made. The Duchess of Marlborough, secretly delighting in the squabble, gave the Princess the benefit of her counsel, mingled however with a circumstantial relation of her disputes respecting the building of Blenheim, and a liberal quantity of abuse of every one who displeased her. The Duchess of Bolton brought her good humour, and an exhaustless stock of blunders. Ladies of quality went to Leicester House to shew their spirit, and then exhibited themselves at St. James's, despite the royal mandate. Indeed so many ladies of distinction visited the Princess, that it was fully expected the King would shortly be abandoned to the society of his ugly mistresses.

The Duke of Kingston was amongst the discreet few, who thought it prudent to quit the son for the father; but the Duke of Wharton, the Earl of Peterborough, Philip Dormer, Handsome Hervey, Colonel Argyle, Anthony Lowther and one or two more, were zealous and staunch in the Prince's service, and their many brilliant remarks on the existing state of things formed a continual fund of amusement to the town.

The Princess soon returned to her wonted

able opinions from the sort of s
Ark she contrived to gather and
entertained scholars of every des
all appearance took a vast interest
She held levees for the reception of
astronomers, divines, metaphysi
and other learned characters ; and
as abstruse and unintelligible to
them.

In short, the Princess was estab
of a very superior kind to the one
had been banished ; but scarcely he
consequent on the uncereimonious
family from St. James's abated, wh
a blow that affected her still more
she had scarcely any connection
This affair it was that had produc
sion alluded to at the commen

stine manner not very clearly explained, awn herself from Leicester House. She ne scarcely any one knew how, and no one where.

hat could be ascertained of this mysterious is amounted to this: that a letter had o her from Petersham Manor, stating that gadier had sent John Coachman with the and her black page Pompey for her to home for a day or two, her presence being y required by her father. The Princess roved of her visit, and after taking leave young schoolfellows she had stepped into riot which had immediately driven away. the same day John Coachman and the age had returned to Petersham Manor on ithout the chariot, and the story they told at while the horses were being refreshed usual baiting place at Hammersmith, they ne into the public house to obtain a freshment for themselves. That they were ent five minutes taking a mug of ale with ortion of bread and cheese, yet on return- the door they found the chariot gone; and and the Ostler swore point blank that they m the said John Coachman and the said

the vehicle had proved ineffec-
day when the empty carriage
brought to Petersham Manor
who had discovered them abse-
lane near Richmond, and reco-
had driven them home.

The Brigadier was beside
could be heard of his lost di-
messengers in every direction,
most searching inquiries, he off-
but he did not succeed in ga-
intelligence. The chariot app-
appeared from the road-side i-
and no one had subsequently
its discovery, or the young lady.

At Leicester House there
nions respecting the extraordi-
of the fascinating Maid of Hon-

The Duke of Wharton was satisfied the young lady had been carried off either by the Duke of Buckingham or the Duke of Somerset ; and these two noble rivals were as firmly convinced, that their illustrious President had in his usual daring manner anticipated their design of possessing themselves of that tempting prize. Each lost not a moment in setting his agents at work to watch his rivals, and Captain Spatterdash and Bully Swag, with Jack Wildair, Dick Rumpus, and Tom Pepper were speedily retained to search for the missing lady's hiding place.

Philip Dormer was at first inclined to suspect the Prince ; but his anxiety on learning the mysterious disappearance of the Brigadier's daughter was too genuine to allow of such a suspicion. His Royal Highness inclined to the belief that a forcible abduction had taken place—such crimes being of common occurrence ; but he was at a loss to fix upon the guilty party, his suspicions wavering between the Duke of Wharton and the Earl of Peterborough, both noblemen being in the enjoyment of a vast reputation for gallantry ; but they declared their ignorance of the transaction in such forcible terms that the Prince was constrained to believe them.

her reputation. It was confid
the whole proceeding was no
planned elopement, and it wa
creature," notwithstanding her
rent innocence, was old in ir
ways been ready to run off with
offered. The King was told a
ous stories concerning her ;
take little interest in them, and
currence of her flight with a
choly interest.

The whole town soon became
startling occurrence, and so much
excite, that the last rise of South
create so many wonderers. To
the rumours in circulation, even
more extravagant and romantic
all that

re, between the Folly and the Hercules' and from Hockley-in-the-Hole to Jenny's whilst it was being discussed at choco- es, debated at play-houses, canvassed at ews, and debated upon at the new Ex- we have left the heroine of it without y explanation of her strange adventure. ssary that we inform the reader that our rite left Leicester House in high spirits ; with herself and with all mankind, and omankind also, excepting the particu- r specimens she had been taught to re- ne Princess's enemies.

a little affable gossip with John Coach- l a kind word or two to Pompey, she the chariot, and commenced her home- ney. As she proceeded, she had a fa- opportunity for reflection ; and she em- in thinking over the pleasant life she had n leading, and the pleasant things that y been said to her. And she laughed tender attentions of her old beaux, and ver the more agreeable gallantries of her es ; comparing them with that illustrious ose perfections had made so decided an n on her imagination.

was a sort of dashing spirit in the bear-

doubtedly was, were likely in to
cise a powerful influence over
too were by no means insignifi
abused. His profligacy was n
had the art to hide his vices fro
of the object of his adoration ;
romantic disposition, could se
but the ardent lover—a lover
the brilliant qualifications of m
ite heroes.

Next to him came that mo
and admirable wit, Philip De
votions were not so ardent, th
better expressed. Philip Do
graces both in speech and in co
great pains to show the world h
his lesson. Our Maid of Hon
131-132 to become her outcom.

some Hervey with a thought, it was accompanied with a considerable degree of ridicule. That superlatively fine gentleman amused her exceedingly : she laughed at his elaborate elegance, she laughed at his eccentric remarks, she laughed at all the extravagances and affectations he chose to indulge in. There was no fear of her affections being engaged in that quarter. She could not assimilate Handsome Hervey with any hero of her acquaintance ; and unless there was sufficient of the heroic in the character of the man who presented himself before her as her lover, to satisfy her romantic disposition, he had not the shadow of a chance of obtaining her. No two persons she thought could be more unlike than the brave Prince Oroondates and the effeminate Lord John Hervey.

The Earl of Peterborough would have had by far the most likely chance to succeed amongst these competitors had he been somewhat younger, a little less of a skeleton, and possessed some pretensions to good looks. He was a hero, and, with all his eccentricities, a hero a woman might be proud of. But Handsome Hervey, in her estimation, was as complete a contrast to men of the material such heroes are made, as an Italian

Dormer was not thought to cor-
her romantic standard, which
of the young Duke approached

As for her ancient admire
were tolerated for the amusem
They were regarded as the
comedy of life going on aro
tenderness of the asthmatic
and the pleasantries of the gour
ingham, were but considered as
cations for as much innocent m
her fair schoolfellows could mal

Mary Lepel was pleasantly pa
ages in review before her,
stopped, and she noticed Jo
Pompey enter the inn. Her
tracted by some gipsys on the

hrew herself back in her seat, shut her eyes for some minutes, indulged herself in those day dreams so delightful to young ladies of seventeen. There was a deal of pleasant retrospection mixed up

A delightful reference to the formal nature of her proceedings under the severe eye of the peerless Penelope Stiffandstern, and the agreeable contrast with her back-board and simpler experiences of that date, with her present position as Maid of Honour to her Princess.

Being sufficiently indulged herself with these reflections, it occurred to the Brigadier's daughter that she must be approaching Richmond and she kept a look-out for a refreshing view of the beauties of that charming neighbourhood. To her great surprise she could not see a single feature of the scenery on each side of her. She continued to gaze now at one hill and now at the other, but she beheld nothing familiar to her from either. She could not understand it. There must have been extraordinary alterations made since she drove down here last. Every place appeared different. She puzzled herself to no purpose in thinking

a new road, she discovered a shorter one, for on referring to her map that she ought to have arrived there though she was quite sure she was not.

Her surprise now began to change into consternation, for she fancied the man must have made some mistake in going a wrong road; and with this she let down the glass and called out to ask the reason of his taking that strange direction. But it appeared that the man was so absorbed in his own thoughts that he could not hear her, for after calling out several times he had become hoarse, not that she was taken of her by the ever attentive driver of the coach box.

She was extremely vexed as

not approaching their destination. What gave her most concern was the difficulty she met with in attracting the attention of John Coachman. At other times the slightest word from her would have brought him to an immediate halt. It was inexplicable. If she had not seen him sitting before her as she did, in her father's livery, she would have doubted his being there.

Her embarrassment and anxiety were every minute becoming more intense, and as the chariot entered into a gloomy lane almost canopied with the overarching trees on both banks, she made one more desperate effort to arouse the inattentive charioteer. She managed to put her head out of the glass in front of the chariot, and reached the driver's arm, which she pulled so vigorously that the man turned his face round. With a shriek she fell back against the seat. It was not John Coachman.

Poor Mary Lepel was in a prodigious state of fright. She could not make it out at all. How this stranger had taken the place of her father's old domestic she was unable to imagine; and this silent drive in a different direction to her home, by a person she had never seen before, appeared as mysterious as it was alarming. What could

What was their object: robbery

While vainly endeavouring to
to the intentions of the party
taken possession of her, the
The door opened, a man jumped
the Brigadier's daughter could so
of her fright to say or do anything
head enveloped in a cloak, and
of the carriage. All she could
was that she was immediately lifted
of a horseman, who placed her
him, and then started off at a gallop

In her alarm she must have lost
recovering consciousness she found
couch in a small but well furnished
other companion than an old nurse
serge dress. Her wrinkled physi-

But to a female, the presence of another in a moment of trial, of difficulty, or of danger, is a great consolation. Mary Lepel so considered it, and seemed resolved to make the most of the circumstance for she immediately rushed to her, fell on her knees, and taking hold of her hand, made an earnest appeal to save her from the perils by which she seemed to be surrounded. The woman only merely shook her head, and disengaging herself from the humble and trembling Maid of Honour, suddenly quitted the room.

Left to her own reflections, which were as bearing as they were terrifying, the Brigadier's daughter appeared in a sort of stupor of despair. She thought over the whole of the strange scene in which she had been made to enact a part, and the longer she considered the more, the more she thought of it. What could be the object of taking her away? Who could be the person by whose orders the abduction had been accomplished? Were questions continually asked herself; and of course in a state of alarm in which she was, she could give no satisfactory answer.

She looked round the room. The furniture was in an old fashion; consisting of heavy carved chairs, with tall backs and handsome tapestry

When Mary Lepel had recovered her composure, the old woman again in silence presented her with a letter surprised to find a communication to her under such circumstances, she spent much time in breaking the seal; astonishment was prodigiously increased when she read in French the following sentence

“Adorable Creature,

“I shall not disturb you till you are somewhat recovered from the fatigues of your journey. Assure yourself of your repose, take the rest you require. Your attendant will see to your accommodation. Your supplication will be useless your appealing to me expecting her advice, as she has the misfortune of being both deaf and dumb.

ow wonderful!" thought the Brigadier's
er. It was indeed very singular. How
ad she imagined, when leaving the kind
s in the morning, that before the close of
she should have become a prisoner in
elling of this mysterious admirer. Who
yntor? Why was he the most unfortu-
men? What sort of a person was he:
short, fair or brown? That he was a
she could scarcely entertain a doubt, for
ie consideration she could not fix upon
f her admirers as likely to have gained
ion of her by the stratagem which he had
essfully employed.

communication, singular as it was, exer-
most tranquillizing effect upon the troubled
of the fair captive. She appeared more
ed to the accident that had happened to
d regarded her deaf and dumb associate
as repulsiveness than at first she could not
etraying. She even, upon some refresh-
ing brought in by her, sat down and par-
it. She could not, however, avoid think-
the alarm her flight might occasion to her
and the wonder and speculation the report
ould be sure to create at Leicester House.

condemned her own pusillandered that she ought not to have so easily to have fallen into the son, whoever he was, who had present abode. And moreo that it was not by faintings weaknesses that her favor achieved their adventures.

Statira would have been folly; Clelia would have kno easily to have been made a dup have released herself as soon the trick that had been play Chariclea was not likely to be outrage upon her to be commi Mary Lepel considered she o supported her own dignity ;
allan and uahana's weakness

missing her attendant, she looked to the fastenings of the door ; and having as she believed secured herself against intrusion, undressed herself, said her prayers, and went to bed.

CHAPTER

THE VELVET

Of all the bright beauties
In London's fair city the
None can give me such joy
As the beautiful Molly I
LO

NEXT morning, scarcely had breakfasted, and her silent attendant the door again opened, and a gentleman a little below the middle age, handsomely dressed in a suit of dark cloth. He made a profound bow as he stepped behind her: and Mary Lennox

peared to have concluded a series of more humble than graceful genuflections, with which he advanced towards her.

The Brigadier's daughter did not think proper to rise from her seat. She had thought a good deal upon her position, and had determined to let Mr. Amyntor, however unfortunate he might think himself, know that he had done a most unpardonable thing in depriving her of her liberty; and that she insisted on being restored to her friends.

"I come to implore your pardon, incomparable creature!" exclaimed the gentleman in the velvet mask, in very good French, "for the little violence I have been obliged to use in obtaining the gratification I now enjoy of having a beauty of such ravishing attractions under my roof."

"Sir!" exclaimed the youthful Maid of Honour, with a dignity extremely becoming in so determined a heroine, "I am astonished at your presumption. Permit me, Sir, to say that I have been taken away from my friends by a trick unworthy a man of honour. I beg, Sir, you will have the goodness to make this interview as short as possible, and without the least delay, provide me with the means of reaching my father's house."

"I would outstrip the wind
divinest of your sex," replied
quiously; "but unfortunately
it not in my power to oblige
you wish. Every attention
whilst you honour this place,
you may rely on the enjoyment
and the possession of every
assured, that I shall be too
all the means at my disposal to
ness of so ravishing a creature

"Sir, you are trifling with
Brigadier's daughter. "I am
wish of mine, nor is it my
you are not disposed to act to
of honour, by expediting my
house, I beg you will not inter-
lunge."

"Begone, Sir !" she exclaimed, starting up from her seat with a particularly indignant look ; "your language, in the position in which I am placed, is as little creditable for you to utter, as for me to hear."

She then quietly walked away to the other end of the room, leaving the gentleman in the velvet mask in no small degree disconcerted by the spirited manner in which she had expressed herself. He was also a little irritated. He had anticipated a different scene with his beautiful captive, whose extreme youth and utter helplessness he expected would have influenced her to behave very differently. He paused a few minutes ; but as the young lady took no further notice of him, he became more exasperated. He strode after her with violent strides, and seized her by the arm.

"Zounds, Madam, this tone must be altered !" he cried, in a sharp and angry voice ; "you forget you are completely in the power of one who never suffered himself to be trifled with."

"Sir, I neither know nor care who you are," replied the Maid of Honour, very proudly, as she disengaged her arm from his grasp ; "it is misfortune enough for me to be aware that I have fallen into the hands of one who is so lost to every

"S'death, Madam ! Beware
me !" shouted he, with a men-
less than this, creatures as far
been punished in a manner to
burthen and a disgrace."

The Brigadier's daughter's
heart beat fast, and her cheeks
usual : but such a Roxana
forth from those beautiful eyes
panion hesitate.

"When, Sir, may I ask, is
detention to cease ?" she at last
ing at him as if to pierce
the troubled features beneath.

"That depends on yourself,
the gentleman in more courtesy
I to fulfil the intentions which
been placed in my hands. your

to one who has long worshipped you, though in secret."

"I cannot but suppose, Sir, you are labouring under some error respecting the identity of the person you are addressing," said Mary Lepel, coldly. "I am the daughter of Brigadier General Lepel, and a Maid of Honour to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales."

Saying this, the Brigadier's daughter gracefully glided past him; and before he could recover from his surprise, she had entered her bedroom, and locked herself in. The stranger made two or three hearty execrations, and then slowly quitted the apartment.

Mary Lepel was now left to her own reflections, and they did not happen to be the most consolatory. She had not discovered who was the individual into whose power she had fallen; but by the careful manner in which he concealed his features, it was very possible he was some one of consequence. There could be little doubt she had been kidnapped for some abominable purpose; and from what the gentleman in the velvet mask had allowed to escape him, it appeared as if there were other parties to the transaction.

She shuddered as she thought of the fate that

suffer herself to be dishevelled
looked bad enough, for she felt
greatly incensed her captor
towards him ; nevertheless, she
had Cassandra, or any other
been placed in the same position
have conducted herself more
had done. With this conspiracy
rose, and she determined
if there existed any possibility

At the summons of her attendant
to the room. She now paid
to the old woman's movements
fancied she saw, that she
object of stricter attention.
pression lurked in her cat
rarely left the apartment. Her
forbidding, more hag-like than

She was a woman though a most unfeminine specimen of her sex; and the youthful Maid of Honour felt in her society a degree of safety which she could not have experienced had she been left alone.

It was a tantalising thing in her opinion to be placed with a person so incapable of anything like social communication, when she was so extremely anxious to obtain a little knowledge that might enable her to shape her course with safety. The Brigadier's daughter, however, bore the deprivation of conversation with as much philosophy as might be expected from a young lady of such heroic tendencies

The dinner had been enjoyed with a tolerable appetite; for the poor captive thought it most advisable to appear as nearly reconciled as possible to the position in which she had been placed. She thought that if she could lull suspicion, facilities for escape would be much more likely to be afforded her, than if she fretted, or became restless and troublesome.

The time, however, hung very heavily on her hands; and she could not avoid occasionally feeling extremely uncomfortable. Towards the close of the day her silent attendant left the room,



French song ; and with lit
chair, and placed it by her si
might have noticed that he
ward, and very unsteady in
had considerable difficulty in
the desired position, and ver
the young lady's toes.

She took no notice of
sidling up to her, going round
and peering impudently into
voice he continued his unma
last he sat himself by her :
legs stared her full in the face

" I hope Mademoiselle is
he said. " I am monstrously
admirable a beauty endeavor
spoil her attractions by looking
Venus never frowns There

gods for the good fortune that has so matchless an acquisition. It is our retreat should be discovered. In vain, till arrangements are made for a position infinitely less agreeable. I have been chosen as an agent to transport you to a place where you must become very much more than some, who are not your equals. You, you are likely to be, should they remain at the Court of his Britannic Majesty. I must needs acknowledge, if ever a man could push aside all rivals, you are the man. They thought, poor fools! I was as much as they did. They made a mistake, Mademoiselle, I assure you. I am religiously. I swear to you I never felt so much to my fancy. I am quite content when I look at that exquisite face. 'Tis enough to bring about another Trojan war." Elizabeth listened attentively and in perfect admiration of her companion's volubility. She sat in an attitude which would have commanded the admiration of that unrivalled teacher, the peerless Penelope Stiffand. Not a muscle moved, not a word escaped

geance has been terrible, tho
may be thought as little caus

“Your position is indeed f
are a dove in the claws of a h
brood of hawks. I alone ca
save you, Mademoiselle. You
your life in a distant prison,
victims I could name ; or be s
as a female slave, which one
you ; or shut up in a mad-ho
desire of another. You shal
little queen, and you shall
Mademoiselle ?”

Mary Lepel shuddered as
that had been designed her b
she had made ; but her cou
her.

“Sir” she replied withd

the best of my belief, I have no enemies. I have done nothing to excite enmity; I have never injured any one by word, thought, or deed."

"Mademoiselle, it is your beauty that hath done you so much mischief," answered the gentleman in the velvet mask; and then in a more impassioned manner added, as he sought to place his arm round her waist, "it is your beauty that must free you from its fatal consequences."

"Unhand me, sirrah!" she exclaimed, her eyes flashing with indignation, as she endeavoured to free herself from his embrace. "Your tale I cannot doubt is a fabrication. Your conduct sufficiently proves to me how unworthy you are of the slightest confidence."

"Nay, my charmer! I swear to you I have stated nothing but the truth," added her companion, drawing her graceful figure towards him; "and I will take the oath on those rosy lips."

"Villain! you shall dearly repent this insult!" cried the Brigadier's daughter, struggling with all her power to elude the threatened caress. Her strength, however, was insufficient for her defence. She had to combat against a man equally inflamed with wine and lust, who had determined on the infamous course he meant to adopt. She

mask fell off, and she had
recognising the unprepossessing
King's Hanoverian favourite

The Baron, disconcerted
loosened his hold, and he
diately took advantage of
from his embrace.

“Is this the way, Baron
manded with dignity, “you
less subjects of the sovereign
possess? The consequence
have dared to commit may
than you imagine. I insist
immediately restoring me to
take care to exact from you
atrocious insult you have offered

The face of the Baron was
whilst confusion kept him c

standing the care he had taken to preserveognito. He at last found words witho express himself.

"I know me then, Madam Lepel?" he uttered, pretty well sobered by a consideration of the results of this adventure, should the lady make her friends acquainted with it. However, he determined to prevent at all

"I am afraid the discovery will be more us to you than to myself. It forces me decisive line of conduct. I will give you consideration. In four and twenty hours my return; and if the same pride and influence you, to the extent they have done, your doom will be sealed. Take. Accept the good offices of a friend, he has it in his power to serve you."

aying the Baron Bothmar made his captive ow, and marched out of the room, in as e a state of embarrassment as it was possible a Hanoverian nobleman to get into. The er's daughter recognised the courteous ent of the discomfited Baron, with the very t inclination of her pretty head; and saw r closed upon him with a degree of satisfaction she could hardly bring herself to acknow-

were not impossible. She had
Hanoverians, both by the
and was now ready enough
might have been led by je
mark her out for destruction
have reached Leicester Hou
that amongst her numerous
quickly raise for her a cha
Prince Oroondates; and, ac
never had a distressed lady
the interposition of such a he

Mary Lepel was not distu
day. Her silent attendant ca
and carried, scrutinized her
her movements with cat-like
her uneasiness had greatly in
contrived to get through th
quietude: and having taken

her spirit had become more capable of the difficulties of her position. She had entered the adventure thoroughly, and saw, and she saw, why so much mystery had been displayed; why her attendant had been deprived of all use of the two principal eyes; why the velvet mask had been adopted; why the Baron had always chosen to converse in the dark.

She looked out of the window, and saw close by the wall-made gravel walk a box tree cut in the shape of the Queen of Sheba, whilst at a little distance was a similar effigy of King Solomon. She therefore lay in that direction, from which she did not seem possible to escape, for a wall encompassed it.

The morning meal was passed, and the old

fancied she could then hear & partly open close to her, and pause she glided into the chamber.

The persons conversing within the inner room, the door of which was open ; and fancying she heard what was mentioned, Mary Lepel crept through a spacious apartment, unobserved, and ventured to peep by the side of the hinges, to see what was going on, without being seen within. The first object here was the gaunt figure of Madame de M. The powerful favourite was seated in an angry voice, with violence, Madame Kielmansegge, who was seated in an arm-chair, near a

other was thin and blue. Baron Bothmar was at a little distance, listening to their communications.

Now it so happened that Mary Lepel, though she readily recognised the persons of every member of this worthy trio, and could every now and then hear her name mentioned, could only guess at the subject of their discourse; for they spoke a German—a language with which unfortunately he was totally unacquainted. We must therefore explain that the ladies were acquainting the gentleman with the great success they had had with the King in all their recent proceedings; that they had so fomented the quarrel between him and his son, that a proposal had even been made and considered by his Majesty to kidnap his heir, and send him to the plantations; that the South Sea Scheme had turned out a most advantageous speculation, though the immense gains of Sir John Blunt, and the suspicious manoeuvres of the more active of his coadjutors had already excited the public attention.

They gossiped on such matters with marvellous plausibility, occasionally refreshing their tongues with the contents of their glasses, which the Baron with an impressive gallantry took care frequently to fill.

gone to the magistrates, and applied to the Secretary of State ; that a large reward has been offered for the discovery of the place where she is concealed. I had no idea her arrest had caused such a stir as there is now in the town about her."

" Oh it's ever the case, my dear burg," replied Madame Kielmanogorsky, of her immense head. " There is a tremendous deal more fuss made about nothing little chits, if anything more than they are worth."

" But we must be quick, Bathurst lady. " I cannot rest till this is done in a manner that shall prevent her from doing us for the future. There is a ship at anchor and she could be got on board on the

panion, as she took a good sip at the glass, "I'm for the short and sure. We've got her fast enough, and can dispose of her as we like, without exciting suspicion. To take her to the ship would be to risk discovery. I think there could be no great difficulty in getting rid of her at once."

"I think so too," said the Schulenburg in a decided tone. "The Lord has placed her in our hands, let us avail ourselves of His goodness. The King too has been inquiring urgently after her; I think we should best consider our own safety, by quietly putting her out of the way. The old hag you employ would manage the matter as expeditiously as possible."

Mary Lepel stole away from the door as noiselessly as she had approached it. As she did so, she saw on a table several articles of female apparel which there could be no doubt the two favourites had placed there upon their entering the house. The thought entered her mind that by their assistance she might succeed in making her escape. In the next moment, with a mask on her face, a hood over her head, a muff in her hand, and as quickly putting on a few other articles of a lady's walking costume, she went out of the

gaudy liveries catching as they
of their mistress, with a vast
opened the street door where a
standing. The steps were ins
the lady got in, the door was b
carriage rolled off. The footm
ing they had brought two lac
surprise at only one returning.
in the service in which they we
tice of anything respecting the
ever strange it might be; and
had thought proper to enter the
Madame Kielmansegge, they
sidered that they had no busine
and had nothing to do but to
the fat coachman to drive home
functionary did with as much
could put into the heavy heels

use and celerity the most astonishing. She
lered at her own courage, and wondered
at her presence of mind in a position of so
danger. . But so far she had done well.
was still much to do. She was in the car-
of a most vindictive enemy, and where that
re might be taking her, she had not the
lea, and she did not dare to inquire.

some time the handsome vehicle, with its
achman sitting in great state on the box,
re three tall footmen clinging to the back,
ded along a road bounded on each side by
1. It was evident from the number of ve-
of different kinds, and of horsemen they
hat they were not a long way distant from
She next passed several comfortable looking
ons, and presently came upon long straggling
of houses. She looked in vain for any ob-
re could recognize; she had not the most
e idea where she was, or where she was

In all the numberless adventures she had
of, she remembered nothing so extremely
rassing as the one in which she was now
ed.

CHAPTE

J E N N Y ' S

" Ah, ma'am, you did not

" I'll tell you all her histo

At this Charles Stanhope g

" At Leicester House her p

And Nanty Lowther was

SIR CHARLES

" I'm monstrous uneasy i
Lepel," exclaimed Sophy F
den, as they sat together in
room finishing their toilet.
happened to her. She was
me, and I own I was vastly
turn "

ing troubled. "But she is now just as she was at school, the best of us all. *Parbleu!* I would rather have lost two lovers than one Mary Lepel."

"I'll be hanged if I would not rather have lost a dozen," cried the other with animation. "In fact, child, I think both of us could spare a few. I would readily give up all my lot, even including Peterborough, much as I like that queer creature, to get back our beloved Molly."

"Would you give up that dear, deceitful, languishing Lowther, *ma chère?*" inquired her companion archly.

"Oh do not name the wretch to me. I positively hate him!" answered Sophy Howe. "I do indeed. I hear he is always with that good-for-nothing jade Lady Bab Brilliant. I rarely see his worthless face, except in public, when in his odious way he sometimes ventures to say a civil thing to me as if he had seen me for the first time. It so moves one to be treated in this abominable manner, that one can scarcely refrain from boxing the coxcomb's ears."

"Ah, *ma mignonne*, I doubt he is half so troublesome as Argyle," said Mary Bellenden, putting some French ribbons into her hair. "I

aloof from me as though I had
Dieu ! if I did not like him :
would give the varlet his c
first time I met him. If I but
he withdraws himself as if to
Grace. If I mention Dorm
vokingly anxious I should enjo
society ; and if I smile on the
becomes quite rampant. I
not agreed to meet him to-day

“ What, at Jenny’s Whim ?
hastily, “ I wouldn’t give up
enjoying there, for a hundred
gyles together. Why, I have
derstand that we shall pass ou
we shall be vastly loath to lea
for dinner. I greatly enjoy th
entertainments. ’Tis a prodig

lucy toss of her beautiful head. "Reading a well-thumbed volume of the Spectator, or listening to the disputations on philosophy the Princess so fond of encouraging, till the disputants are kept by dread of their illustrious patroness from pummelling each other on the spot, varied the interminable gossip of the Duke of Devonshire respecting the grandfathers and grandmothers of my Lord this, and my Lady t'other:—telling me, if I am not heartily sick of it."

'*Sans doute*, being Maid of Honour is dull work sometimes," added Mary Bellenden, "provisionally dull work; but, *ma foi!* there is also much amusement in it. We have plenty of work."

'Fools are to be found everywhere, and a palace is sure to be their head quarters," answered her lively friend, as she carefully placed a patch in its appointed place. "It's a monstrous good thing we are allowed pretty well to do as we like, when not in presence; and our hardest task when on duty is to keep our countenances. The Duke helps certainly to render us pretty comfortable. The Prince particularly. May I die a maid," she cried, laughingly, "if ever any poor woman was plagued with such a mass of awkwardness

"Well, child, he furthermore inquiring what I should do if h of my rosy lips."

"*Est-il possible ?* and what d

"I replied I should heartily b

"*Ma foi !* that was well said reply to that ?"

"He laughed, and chuckled n and told me he should try his vourable opportunity. And ad English : 'I should see, I shou plied : He should feel, he shoul

"*Mon Dieu !* he is a sad hus Princess."

"And a sad lover to our Molly?" answered her friend, : apropos of lovers ; I had mighty mine Father night at the masn

'adieu ! You went alone !”

To be sure I did. I tried to find out my
but could not distinguish him among so
y. I was not long before a smart, well-made
herd makes up to me ; and he uttered so
inquiries after my sheep, and as to whether
lambs had gone astray, and the like rustic
ions, with a good deal of wit, that I was
ily diverted. He seemed no less enter-
l by me, for I did my best to shine, and I
se succeeded, for he did not leave me all
vening. He was so vastly pleasant and
t, I began to be prodigiously curious to
who he was ; and I could easily see by his
ons he was no less anxious to discover who
. At last we both agreed to unmask at the
moment. And who do you think the fellow
fter all ?”

[a foi ! Perhaps, some city apprentice.”

Anthony Lowther, as I hope for a hus-
”

[on Dieu !”

’e both were not a little astonished by
ntual discovery ; but he positively swore he
me all the time by my incomparable shape ;
vowed as stoutly I knew him by his genteel

in the Ring, yesterday, *ma chère*

"No, Molly, not a word. I
for I want to be off to Jenny's

"I was riding on a high-s
when he shied at a soldier cro
in a moment was off at speed.
have been off, too, had not
made a rush and, at some
pulled him short up. I wore
do, and my squire had not th
of who he had rescued; but,
monstrous fine speech respe
satisfaction at having been of
discovered myself. He was
confusion, and I rated him
lantry to strangers; protestin
he did me by his risking his
when he should be entirely d

Buckingham, and as soon as I replied to their tender greetings, my fine Colonel, in the usual dudgeon, makes me a low bow, as much as to say your very humble servant; and would you believe me, *ma belle*! trots away as unconcernedly as if leaving the merest acquaintance in the world!"

The two beauties at last completed their toilet, and in a very short time afterwards they might have been seen in a hired chariot taking the road to Chelsea. They laughed, and talked all the way about who they were going to meet, and how they should behave to them. But whilst they are progressing, it would be perhaps as well if we were to say something about their place of destination.

Jenny's Whim was a celebrated suburban tavern, situated at the end of the wooden bridge at Chelsea. There were gardens attached to it, and a bowling-green, and parties were frequently made, composed of ladies and gentlemen, to enjoy day's amusement there in eating strawberries and cream, syllabubs, cake, and taking other refreshments, of which a great variety could be procured, with cider, perry, ale, wine, and other liquors in abundance.

the Duke of Marlborough cut
and the roses, and daisies, c
berries that spread their allur
path.

This was a favourite res
in courting time—a day's p
Whim being considered by th
enticing enjoyment that could
often the hearts of the most
way beneath the influence
Jenny's Whim, therefore, ha
season plenty of pleasant par
of both sexes. Sometimes a
filled, and its gardens throng
mental visitors.

The two Maids of Hono
there with very little difficult
shewn into a clean and tidy c

lightly ran up the stairs and entered the
ms.

followed a volley of friendly greetings,
ty compliments, and pleasant speeches,
y without end, which helped to create an
of excellent mirth. Anthony Lowther
to press the siege he had hitherto car-
cautiously. He was amazingly tender
tention, and gazed, as though with a
ming with passion, at the animated
omy of his mistress. His lustrous eyes
of that languishing expression which
so expressive an affix to his name, and
er was as dangerous as his looks.

l Argyle was equally resolved to capti-
t he had very opposite ways and means
so. He was a totally distinct sort of
the distinguished Lady Killer, to whom
ust alluded; possessing about as much
as Nanty Lowther had assurance, and
ignorant of the philosophy of a woman's
his friend boasted of being learned in it.
nel Argyle was sincere, devoted, honest,
ss; he would stop at nothing to obtain
guerdon as the hand of Lord Bellenden's
; but he required as much sincerity, as

The little party sat at a small
the open window enjoying the
cream, making pleasant observ-
groups below, and interchang-
and jests with equal facility. To
the strawberries better, and
disposed for as much enjoy-
afforded. There was much talk
and plenty of good humour,
and reserved Colonel appeared
completely at his ease, as if
Nanty Lowther undoubtedly

"I suppose I am wondrously
claimed Sophy Howe in her
manner, as she spooned up
"But I fancy there may be a
troublesome world than eat
Jenny's Whim."

said the first speaker. "Of course your company is all the feast to us two simple damsels. Is it not Molly?"

"*Sans doute*," replied Mary Bellenden; "strawberries and cream are very well in their way; but agreeable beaux are a much choicer dish."

Mr. Lowther endeavoured to explain; but the two lively girls would not understand his explanation, and insisted that gentlemen so extremely gallant, so prodigiously civil, and so exquisitely well-bred, rose in their estimation like South Sea Stock.

"Talking of South Sea Stock," said the Colonel, "the people seem in a desperate frenzy to embark whatever they possess in this popular speculation. Sir John Blunt has become a greater man than the Prime Minister, and his levees are more numerously attended!"

"Never mind Sir John Blunt, Colonel," cried the lively Sophy Howe, refilling her mouth; "we have no room for him here. I'm sick of hearing the fellow's name. We haven't met to discuss the merits of South Sea Stock, but of strawberries and cream. We will have nothing to do with Lammon. Scandal and Gossip are our only gods."

"Oh your humble servant
Howe jumping up and hasty
"Child, why don't you shew
Lowther's compliment to us
dressing her schoolfellow.

"*Ma foi*, I'm vastly obliged
Bellenden's daughter ; "but
passed for Venus, whom of course
semble, that the compliment
out of date. What do you think
Colonel ?"

"To tell you the plain truth
opinion of Madam Venus," said
gravely ; "by all accounts she
of characters. I had rather refer
to a more respectable personage

"Oh fie, Colonel !" exclaimed
" " " " " " " " " " " "

for fear they should afterwards be as ill as the bewitching goddess."

My part I am monstrous taken with this Anthony Lowther, filling his mouth with "her free nature and liberal disposition which as ought naturally to belong to the virtues themselves. She is undoubtedly wise; and the more nearly they resemble her natures, the more closely will they exert their power."

"Is something to know that," cried Sophie with a laugh; "but goddesses are high for imitation. My modesty would never take such a model."

"Indignous glad to hear it!" exclaimed Gyle with emphasis. "But let us get to our feast. It's mighty well talking of virtues; but I for one know a modern one that Greece and Rome could boast of, of women."

"A flatterer for you!" cried Sophie, holding up her well-filled spoon half to her mouth. "'Tis a thousand pities you do not know that matchless fair. She should be our mistress;—the one sole head of our humble community."

time," here observed Anthon the impressiveness of a love not going to renounce his con-

"Not for worlds!" replied King. "For my part, I can't do must be my companion and go all that the little dog is to the a step unless he shews me the

"*Ma foi*, it is just so with Bellenden's daughter. "I see fog; but Cupid is my link-bearer safely and pleasantly through the

"'Egad, I'm inclined to think monstrous busy time of it!" Lowther. "He plays little dog boy to another:—it is to be are well remunerated."

"What said the other?"

and at several more of the same nature ; and their pleasant repast proceeded most pleasantly till its conclusion. A division of the two couples then took place. Sophy Howe and Anthony Lowther looking from the window upon the various parties in the garden and bowling green ; and Colonel Argyle and Mary Bellenden remaining in a distant party of the room engaged in a conversation that appeared more than ordinarily interesting to them both.

Lord Bellenden's daughter had made such constant use of the finishing graces of her education, that all her acquaintances were as well acquainted with every shrug, grimace, nod, shake, and pet phrase, as herself. They had once had a marvellous effect ; and the most accomplished Frenchwoman of that age might have been satisfied with the impression she produced by a judicious use of them, at her first entrance into society. But then they were novelties :—now they were as well known as the signs in the Strand.

She therefore began to relax a little in reproducing her Parisian recollections ; administering them sparingly, according to the state of the patient, and modifying her French prejudices to render them more intelligible to an English mind.


usual. He spoke in a vein of right feeling, and finding himself was fast getting rid of the old understanding with the object. For it was as evident as light that the gallant Colonel was the beautiful Mary Bellender pretty clear that that elegant lady was as well disposed towards him as possible for so distinguished a lady as a male acquaintance. These communications did a vast deal of good to both. They determined that they could, of whatever stood mutual attachment.

In the meantime, there was a nature going on between the two. There was a great deal of dis-

female hearts. His words were most powerful ; but more powerful still were his looks. His soft, seductive air was exercised upon his heedless companion with a most striking effect ;—his delusive smile, his enamoured glance, were singularly potent.

The giddy Sophy heard his thrilling praises with a careless ease, as though they were things she did not much care for : she appeared to treat the matter as a jest, and bantered her lover on the extent of his devotion. She played with the flame she had herself created ; yet approached it nearer and nearer till it threatened to scorch her with its heat. This apparent carelessness, however, did not deceive the experienced eye of such a professed lady-killer as Nanty Lowther. The bird was merely fluttering before the eyes of the careful fowler, previously to the move that was to fix her irretrievably in the net.

In this manner the two pairs of lovers amused themselves for some time, till they thought proper to enter the gardens, and observe the amusements that were there being enjoyed. From this scene they soon found it necessary to take their departures, as they discovered that the eccentric Lord Peterborough was amongst the



Lord Peterborough, as he
favourite stick, brought it on
with prodigious force on the
Had the blow fallen a little lo
knocked the man's head off;
sent to a most inconvenient d
cocked hat and wig, and h

The little party from the Court having witnessed this scene made a hasty retreat, rather than bring upon themselves the notice of the eccentric Earl. Sophy Howe insisted upon being taken to the Chelsea Bun-House; a demand immediately seconded with equal vivacity by Mary Bellenden. The gentlemen had nothing for it, but to submit; and in a short time the lovers saw before them the identical long low building, at that time so celebrated throughout the metropolis.

They were just on the point of mounting the steps, for a supply of the delicious little cakes for which the place had become famous, when a carriage was noticed approaching, with rather more than the usual speed attempted by such vehicles in those days.

"*Bon Dieu !*" exclaimed Mary Bellenden, in some surprise. "Here comes the Schulenburg's chariot. I wonder what evil errand she has been about. We will have a good look at her at any rate."

"Is it the Maypole or the Elephant and Castle?" inquired Sophy Howe, laughingly. "Or are the two Dulcineas taking the air together?"

"It must be the former," observed Anthony

“ There is but one person in
served the Colonel, who was
the approaching vehicle, as we

The awkward cumbrous and
approached at a moderate trot
coachman, now looking more
Chancellor, and with the three
same flaring livery clinging be-
down on the side nearest the
the little party who had just
see into the vehicle without a
person only was visible, and al-
door as greatly to favour Soph-
having a good stare—to obtain
she planted herself a little be-
fully intent upon raising a laugh
the royal favourite.

The carriage had reached the

"Gracious Heavens, that is not Mademoiselle Schulenburg !" exclaimed Sophy Howe.

"That is our dear Molly Lepel's voice !" cried Mary Bellenden, looking extremely excited. "I'm sure it is. Stop the carriage, Colonel ; for God's sake stop the carriage. There is foul play going on."

"Hie, coachman !"

"Stop, rascal !" cried both gentlemen at once ; and at the same moment both sprung forward. The coachman did not seem inclined to stop, as he had before now found it necessary to employ increased speed on such summonses, instead of pulling up ; and fearing his mistress was about to be complimented after the customary fashion, he whipped his horses preparatory to a start.

On went the carriage at full speed, with a lady leaning out of the open window and the two gentlemen in furious pursuit, shouting lustily to the passengers to stop the horses ; which had such effect upon all persons within, hearing that a robbery was made by every man within a reasonable distance, in the firm conviction one of the King's highway frows was carrying off the lady who was leaning out so lustily.

The carriage was stopped : the gentlemen soon

opened the door, and to the complete bewilderment of the portly coachman and his three tall assistants in crimson and gold-lace, a strange young lady, whose mask had dropped off in her struggle, was carried fainting out of the vehicle. As neither of the servants could give any account of how they came by her, and she was immediately recognised as the missing daughter of Brigadier General Lepel, they were on the point of being roughly used by the clamorous mob that had quickly assembled, and were extremely desirous of hanging them together, when a constable coming up ended the discussion by taking all four to the round-house on the unusual charge of stealing a Maid of Honour.

The accused were accompanied by a riotous assemblage, pelting them with mud till their gaudy finery was in a most woeful pickle. Disappointed in the summary justice they were so desirous of inflicting, the mob turned their rage upon Mademoiselle Schulenburg's fine vehicle which they soon made in a condition to be used only as a pig-sty.



CHAPTER XI.

PIPING TIMES AT COURT.

From peer or bishop 'tis no easy thing
To draw the man who loves his God or King ;
Alas ! I copy ; or my draught would fail,
From honest Mahomet or plain parson Hale.

POPE.

ONCE more we must return to courtly scenes, or rather to scenes that, though they belonged to the Court, had little of the Court belonging to them. We return to his Britannic Majesty, who happened to be closeted with his Prime Minister. Were they absorbed in discussing the extraordinary state of affairs on the continent, or at least directing their attention to some of the many important points included in home politics ? Sir Robert Walpole was an able man ; and his able measures, notwithstanding the unprincipled opposition he met with, had been greatly approved by

or discussing new measures? nothing of the kind. They were opposite each other, yet at a distance, with no other occupation than their pipes.

Yes, the King was in a good mood, with some satisfactory arrangements having been completed, and he had shown recognition of his merits by inviting them to smoke a pipe with him. They had accepted the invitation, and a few minutes since he had been propped up and applied himself to a pipe, as he beheld in the hands of the royal mouth had opened but smoke.

There sat the King in his st

ge things in that tobacco smoke. Faces had not seen for years or wished to see, to glare at him from every dissolving above him; and the one face—the fair e that had so long haunted him, seemed forth from the mass of vapour before it with the surrounding atmosphere, with shing expression which had often before troubled his conscience.

Minister was much better dressed than his He was not an exquisite, but he appeared e the head of his family and the Prime of England. He looked becomingly grave, ked with the air of one fully appreciating ous mark he was enjoying of his royal onfidence. This confidence, however, it at all likely he would abuse—simply be- yet nothing had been told him. Sir Robert r a break in this long silence; and busied ith thinking of the subjects most likely to Majesty's observations. Foreign policy, of parties at home, finance, war, religion, and taxation, were rapidly run over; and acious sovereign opened his lips only to e smoke, he kept so systematically draw- f his clay pipe.

vapour that at every exhalation
mouth. Sir Robert was begin
He was a public speaker, use
action of his organs of speech
inactivity became extremely
Robert was as loyal a courtier
palace. He would not on at
the usual etiquette.

The Minister puffed, and the
equal silence and solemnity
minutes longer. At last he
removed the end of his pipe
lips, and turned his dull gaze
The watchful statesman in a
mouth dismiss its companion
spectfully towards his sovereign
his Majesty the information
important points he had so dili

"Oh! superlative puddings, please your Majesty," answered the Minister, a little disconcerted at being obliged to speak on so totally unexpected a subject as the merits of the King's cook. "His Majesty will glide at once to a subject of a higher interest," thought he. But this expectation was disappointed by the King returning the pipe to his mouth, and beginning to smoke with more energy than ever. The silence now seemed more intense; and Sir Robert Walpole puffed on with the fullest conviction that the King's confidence was not to be coveted by any man who loved the cheerful sounds of the human voice.

After another long interval had elapsed the King made a second brief communication. It was nothing more than a question as to the price of tobacco; which was as briefly answered as it was spoken. In this way, infinitely to the dissatisfaction of the Prime Minister, his Britannic Majesty, at immense long intervals, avoiding every reference to matters of importance, made remarks and asked questions of an extremely unconfidential nature.

It seemed, however, as if his mind was wandering; for the King did not look as though he

hard thinking to discover what
was certain that he never could
to the high honour of smoking
Majesty, unless there was some
he was to be consulted.

Could it be respecting the annexation
of Verden to the Electorate? This was
his favourite project with the King. It was
likely that his Majesty required
bringing it to a conclusion.
connexion with the secret man
had heard, of his Majesty
Schulenburg? It was very much
consulted by the King on
important a step. Could it be
serious affair, of which he had
any authentic intelligence, in
connected with Hanover. in which

though he had sounded the mistresses, and "pumped" the Turks, he had learned nothing respecting it from either.

"My dear friend," said the King very gravely, as he was replenishing his pipe, "I much desire to possess your valuable opinion."

"Now," thought Sir Robert, "it is coming;" and he felt a secret satisfaction at his own sagacity in anticipating the King's intention. While his Majesty re-lit his pipe, his Minister launched out in well-studied phrases upon the pride and happiness he felt in the honour his sovereign conferred upon him in asking his advice. The King smoked on, and nodded his head.

"Yes, my dear Sir Robert, I want your opinion," continued the King. "The Schulenburg—"

"The secret marriage," thought the statesman to himself; "I thought as much."

"The Schulenburg is very anxious—" added the King.

"No doubt she is," thought the Minister. "I hope," said he, in a confidential yet perfectly respectful tone, "that in a short time all cause of anxiety may be removed."

"I hope so too, my good friend," said the

King; and he continued to smoke with a pertinacity extremely provoking to the tantalized statesman. "I told her I thought you could assist her, if any one could," at last he added. Sir Robert poured out his thanks most copiously—"But she appears to me in a very critical state."

Sir Robert was astonished, and looked concerned. He had not heard of the lady's illness, or he should have sent to make inquiries. He hoped the indisposition was not so serious as was supposed. In his heart, however, he was extremely glad there existed a chance, however remote, of getting rid of so troublesome an *intriguante*.

"The Schulenburg is not ill," observed the King, gravely; "it is her parrot that is indisposed."

Sir Robert looked bewildered. He thought that the mind of his sovereign was wandering.

"Yes, the Schulenburg's parrot is moulting," said his Majesty quietly, after a few more puffs; "and I told her I would ask you what treatment it should have."

"Wring its neck, and the Schulenburg's too!" the disconcerted Minister would have exclaimed, if he had not restrained his rising indignation; as it was, he had great difficulty in concealing his feel-

ings. It appeared such a deplorable humiliation, after he had been indulging in so many speculations in the cause of his sovereign's condescension. Instead of requiring his judgment in a matrimonial alliance, or the annexation of a province, he had been called upon to prescribe for a parrot with a pip.

Fortunately for him, the doors leading to the ante-room opened at that moment, and the stalwart Mahomet made his appearance.

"Who waits?" demanded the King, without taking his pipe from his mouth.

"The English General Lepel, most dreaded lord! and his daughter," replied the Turk, with his customary salutation.

"His daughter! the Brigadier's daughter!" exclaimed the King. "How is this, Walpole? The Brigadier's daughter that was missing comes here with her father, desiring an audience?"

"He must have good cause for taking such a step, please your Majesty," answered the Minister, "or you may be sure he would not do so."

"Admit them," said the King; and in a moment the Turk had disappeared. The King and the Minister puffed on in perfect silence; but theacious Walpole felt a conviction that there

must be something more than ordinary in the Brigadier seeking an audience at that time. There *was* something more than ordinary that could have induced such an accomplished courtier as Brigadier General Lepel to disturb his sovereign's privacy. But though the Brigadier was a courtier, he was also a father; and the outrage that had been committed on his child was one he could not hear of, courtier as he was, without seeking to bring the criminals to justice. He therefore sought an audience with the King, that his daughter might make him acquainted with the infamous transaction.

The old beau and his lovely daughter entered, not a little surprised to find the King and his Minister so employed. They were graciously received by the sovereign; and Sir Robert also encouraged them with a glance of recognition. On being asked what had brought them to the palace, the Brigadier, in forcible language, alluded to the abduction of his child, and requested the King would listen to her statement of the extraordinary adventure in which she had been made the chief actor. The King having readily granted the desired permission, Mary Lepel stepped forward, and with a singular union of grace and

desty, that would have done honour to the best of her favourite heroines, gave a circumstantial count of the whole proceeding.

The King listened—apparently with profound attention ; instead of which, his attention was absorbed by the beauty of the youthful Maid of honour : and by the associations which arose out of a fancied resemblance she bore to a lady whose story was intimately connected with his own. Robert Walpole also listened—his interest visibly increasing as the narrative progressed ; and at last he forgot his pipe in considering the extraordinary character of the disclosures he heard. It went out ; and he put it aside.

The King's attention was at length drawn to Mary Lepel's story, by hearing the name of Baron Rothmar ; and as soon as he caught the meaning of the Baron's connection with the mysterious adventure, he glanced at his Minister with an expression that fully satisfied Sir Robert the King felt as indignant as himself. He smoked more vigorously than ever—never attempting to interrupt the narrator in her revelations ; but from time to time casting looks at his Minister, which the latter well knew how to interpret.

At last the Brigadier's daughter came to that

part in her narrative, where she discovered the connection of Mademoiselle Schulenburg and Madame Kielmansegge in the transaction. The King looked uneasy; but as the young lady proceeded to relate her escape disguised in Mademoiselle Schulenburg's apparel, her drive in her carriage from the house in which she had been kept a prisoner, and her joyful recognition by her friends; the forcible stoppage of the carriage, and the care and affection shewn to her by her schoolfellows, till she was sufficiently recovered to proceed to town, his interest was again deeply excited.

Sir Robert Walpole had heard the participation of the King's mistresses in the abduction of the Brigadier's daughter with some alarm, fearing their overpowering influence would shut out all hope of justice from the Brigadier; but as he witnessed the King's increased interest in the narrative, his distrust gave way, and he began to speculate on the chance it afforded of being used to some profit against these mischievous women—an extremely desirable return for the humiliation he had so recently had to endure, in relation to Mademoiselle Schulenburg's parrot.

The Brigadier's daughter had continued her

narrative to its conclusion, in a manner that must have satisfied the most sceptical as to its truth. She felt it to be an arduous task, a task that would have tried the ability of a Clelia or a Statira; but as she had so well undergone the trials and perils of these adventures, she satisfied herself that there could be nothing very formidable in her going through a narrative of them. She acquitted herself exceedingly well, and made a powerful impression, where it was most essential to her interests.

There was a silence of some few minutes at the termination of her narrative, only broken by the regular exhalations of the royal smoker. Sir Robert did not like to disturb it, not knowing whether he might do harm or good; he waited for his royal master to give him his cue. The King looked extremely grave, and puffed on with a steady regularity, as if he did not intend to leave off till the pipe was exhausted.

"Take your daughter home, Brigadier," he said at last, remitting for a moment his whiffs; "we will consider what is best to be done." On saying these words, the King discharging another mouthful of smoke, gently raised the suppliant Maid of Honour with one hand, and kissed her

cheek, then gave his disengaged hand to be saluted by her father; and then more gravely than ever, puffed away whilst the father and daughter retired.

The King made a sign to his Minister to renew his pipe, which he did, and both smoked away again in profound silence. Although Sir Robert Walpole's tongue lay idle, his mind was even more busy than usual. The King's Hanoverian favourites had been intolerable clogs to the machinery of his government; their rapacity, their ignorance, and their ambition doing the King incalculable mischief with his subjects, and giving his Ministers continual annoyance. But they were a privileged nuisance, which he and his colleagues not only were obliged to tolerate, but were equally obliged to court.

Sir Robert thought that an opportunity was opening for getting rid of these foreign harpies—who, notwithstanding his apparent friendliness towards them, he had long felt to be thorns in his side—and was eager to avail himself of it; but the Minister knew this was involved not only in difficulty but in danger. The King was such a creature of habit, that whatever his convictions might be, he was so used to be led by his favour-

ites, it seemed almost too much to expect he would be willing to send them about their business in the summary fashion the case required.

As this train of uneasy thoughts passed through the mind of the cautious statesman, the monarch had also his reflections. They were even less agreeable. To the King's constant cause of disquietude was now joined another, that threatened to give him as much trouble. His mind shifted from Hanover to England, with the rapidity of a theatrical change; but as a good deal bewildered by the additional difficulties presented to him, and smoked on with comfortable feelings, as it was possible for a sovereign to experience after his third

slipole," he said at last, "have you heard of the Prince?"

Robert had waited with more than the patience of an experienced chess player for the next move in the difficult game he thought before him. It was made; and to his quick eye presented a most favourable opportunity for his own play. A reconciliation between the King and his son he had long desired; but had hitherto found insur-

mountable obstacles in the father's animosity, to which fresh fuel was daily given by the arts of his wily favourites. That the King should have made an inquiry after his son without an imprecation, was a most favourable omen, and the Minister immediately took advantage of it, by representing to his Majesty his Royal Highness's extreme concern at having excited his Majesty's displeasure; and his intense desire to shew himself as dutiful and affectionate as his royal father could wish him to be.

This was a pure fiction; but Walpole had previously given the Prince much sensible advice on the subject; and although the latter was entirely indifferent whether the quarrel was made up or not, he had given permission to the Minister to take what steps in the affair he thought best.

"Send for the Prince," replied the King; and smoked on apparently quite unconcerned at the evidence he had just heard of his son's contrition. Sir Robert lost no time in fulfilling the royal command; and then quietly refilled his pipe with tobacco and recommenced smoking with more gratification than ever he had given to the amusement in his life. He anticipated the most

avourable result from the approaching interview, and with the powerful assistance of the heir apparent began to hope he should get rid of the king's ugly harem and Hanoverian council, notwithstanding his Majesty's indolent disposition.

Whilst both parties were absorbed by their reflections, the folding doors were suddenly thrown wide open by the liveried Pages, and with all the ceremony due to his rank, the Groom of the chambers announced "the Prince of Wales."

The Minister rose as the heir apparent entered. The Prince did not assume any extraordinary degree of feeling as he advanced towards the chair which his father sat smoking, as unconcernedly as if there had never been the slightest ill feeling between them. Indeed his Majesty looked upon the heir as he would have noticed the appearance of a total stranger.

The Minister with a sort of trembling apprehension, regarded this mutual indifference. It differed greatly from "The Return of the Prodigal Son," he had allowed his imagination to depict. His Royal Highness he thought should have looked more contrite, and then his Majesty would have looked more conciliatory. As it was, one

heavy sullen set of features appeared the reflection of the other.

The fears of the statesman were at last relieved in the most agreeable manner; for when the Prince approached his father, the King though he continued smoking, nodded to his son. His Royal Highness filially returned the recognition with the same motion of his head.

“Take a pipe, George,” said the King.

The Prince took one from the table, quietly filled the bowl from the tobacco box, lit it, drew a chair near his father, and gravely commenced smoking. The Minister sat down with a light heart. The reconciliation was complete.

The King, the Prince, and the Prime Minister smoked for some time in silence; but the most important arrangements were ultimately settled before the trio separated. His Britannic Majesty briefly stated that he had determined to visit Hanover, and should leave his son guardian of his English dominions during his absence. This journey had a double object—to give his attention to a matter that troubled his waking and sleeping thoughts, and to prevent Baron Bothmar and his associates from continuing their evil designs upon the Brigadier's daughter.

The Prince heard the distinction conferred upon him, and thought less of the additional importance he would gain by it, than the additional advantages it would confer for carrying out his designs upon his Consort's "Maids of Honour."

CHAPTER XII.

NO POPE-RY.

Ah! friend! 'tis love—this truth you lovers know,
In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow,
In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes
Of hanging mountains, and of sloping greens:
Joy lives not here; to happier seats it flies,
And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.

PARN.

It may not perhaps be unknown to the reader that within a few miles of our overgrown metropolis, there exists as perfect an Arcadia as the most classical of citizens could require. At least in this light, it was regarded early in the last century; not perhaps so much by such men of business living east of Temple Bar as are now designated by that name, to whom the nearer and therefore more accessible Hackney or Islington, Clapham or Kennington, according to some particular predilection, possessed Arcadian charms

their rural desires ; but certainly by
of the community who put forth
ensions to refinement and education,
acing Richmond and its neighbouring
looked upon as a peculiarly desirable
summer residence.

these, such persons as were in any
ed, or were desirous of being thought
ith the Court, formed a considerable
d therefore many people of distinc-
oe found possessing either houses or
Richmond, Ham, Petersham, Hamp-
nham, Hammersmith, Kew and Isle-
other places in their vicinity. This
en a favourite neighbourhood with
which Richmond, Kew and Hampton
ontain evidences, and the new family
posed in this respect, to adopt the
r predecessors. The old palaces were
much approved of, and Richmond
Palace and Hampton Court became
avourite summer haunts of the royal
ngland.

business happens just now to have
do either with Kings or Princes, or
ny of their titled or untitled followers,

although it lies with an individual acknowledged at this period to possess indisputable claims to distinction, and who resided in a villa within the favourite district just mentioned. This villa was very pleasantly situated on the banks of the Thames, near Twickenham; and its owner was the fashionable poet of his age, a man whose acquaintance was considered an honour by noblemen of the highest character and influence, and around whom many of those stars that rose above the literary horizon seemed content to revolve, as though they cared only to perform the duty of satellites to so great a luminary. This luminary was Alexander Pope.

He sat in an easy chair in a handsomely-furnished drawing-room, the glass doors opening upon a verdant lawn. He was dressed with elaborate neatness—an evident compromise between splendour and simplicity, which while it could be classed with neither, partook of both. Yet all the care that had been lavished upon his toilet could not conceal from the spectator, that his features were not handsome, that his figure was diminutive, nay, even deformed; and that his whole appearance was mean, and but for the intellectual expression of the

part of the face, extremely unprepos-

etheless, at the moment he is unconsci-
tting for his portrait, he was as well satis-
himself as was the beautiful Narcissus
ery height of his self-affection. He be-
at he was about to prove the nothingness
ical perfection compared with the more
ive charms of intellect, and that the proof
be displayed in a manner the most flatter-
his vanity—of which, like all deformed
, he had an ample share—as it was pos-
man or woman to imagine.

ing his numerous admirers of both sexes,
pearance the most ardent and the most
, was a young and beautiful married lady
y, who held the first place in the world of

To draw so fair a creature from the adu-
a crowd of handsome and noble adorers,
iumph only to be achieved by a master-
nd when he thought he had found in her be-
towards him unmistakable indications that
tired of the insipid flatteries of handsome
d titled fops, and that her eminently gifted
held in supreme contempt the advantages
it might possess as perfectly as a prince, he

felt satisfied his was the master-mind to achieve it.

He had seen her turn from the most eminent of the gay insects of fashion who had their sunshine in the eyes of her sex, to speak to him in language of the most gratifying, of the most encouraging tone and tendency. He had been habituated to praise, and to praise of as covetable a kind as a popular poet could desire ; for it came from eminent scholars and men of highly cultivated understandings holding commanding positions in the great world in which he was so ambitious of moving ; but all this affected him but little in comparison with the honeyed accents, accompanied as they were with the thrilling glances, of one fascinating woman.

Alexander Pope had had no experience in the affections of women of a rank so much higher than his own. He had heard, he had seen many things not likely to give him a very exalted opinion of their moral qualities ; and when he had begun to address the lady who so distinguished him, in a language of high wrought gallantry that could not be misunderstood, and found it listened to with more favour than she chose to vouchsafe to the flatteries of his noble rivals, as he was pleased to

consider them, he could not but be satisfied he was gaining ground in her favour.

He had next addressed her in complimentary verses—so complimentary indeed, that a woman possessed of the smallest discernment must have seen the passionate heart, that in every tender pulse throbbed in her service. Smiles of the most bewitching character rewarded his muse; and the imagination of the poet revelled in an inexpressible ecstasy, as he saw in the approving looks of his mistress how completely she responded to the sentiments he had dared express.

So far all proceeded in accordance with his most sanguine wishes; but he found that to proceed further in the affair, he must enjoy advances, which the few interviews he was enabled to gain in the gay circles in which he met the lady, could not confer. Emboldened by her encouragement, he invited her to visit his villa to inspect the garden he had just laid out on a new plan; and, as if to complete his satisfaction, she readily consented—indeed she expressed the utmost delight at the idea.

Mr. Pope was now waiting in his handsomest apartment, the opportunity which was to enable him to forward his suit in the most satisfactory

manner. He had used the greatest care that his villa should be seen to the greatest advantage by his beautiful visitor. Everything had been placed where it could be seen to the best effect ; furniture, ornaments, flowers, pictures, and books were displayed only where they were most likely to please the eye. Nothing was allowed to intrude itself upon the attention calculated to introduce a discordant association.

The care which the poet had bestowed upon his property, he had not failed, as has already been stated, to bestow upon himself ; but the gay looking chairs and tables, the handsome mirrors, the attractive pictures, and the rest of the well-arranged decorations of the room, had evidently most rewarded his care. This however it may be presumed was not his own opinion : for after he had sent a well satisfied glance round the apartment, he never failed to look much longer, and with much greater satisfaction at the reflection of his own neatly dressed figure, that was to be seen in a mirror placed conveniently opposite.

Satisfied as the poet was, both with himself and all his appurtenances, he was far from being perfectly at ease. His feelings had been powerfully acted upon ; he had indulged in visions brighter than those of Alnaschar ; he had raised structures

more imposing than those of Solomon ; therefore it cannot be considered strange that he should be in a state of considerable excitement. Indeed it would not be exaggerating to say that he had completely intoxicated himself with his own happyancies.

As if to divert his thoughts, he snatched from the table near him some written pages that had been placed there, and commenced reading them. This he did with so pleased and so intense an interest, that he became absorbed in the occupation. A few minutes had elapsed in this way, when a door opened ; but this did not disturb the reader.

"Lady Mary Wortley Montagu !" exclaimed his servant in a tone that would have aroused her master, even had the name not possessed the powerful spell that had so thoroughly overmastered his faculties. The poet sprung from his chair as if forced forward by an electric shock, and hurriedly replacing the manuscript on the table, advanced towards the door with as much easy dignity as it was possible for him to assume on so short a notice. At the same moment there entered his lovely visitor, apparently more fascinating in face and figure, and more attractive in dress since her return from the East than ever.

"My dear Mr. Pope!" she exclaimed, meeting him with a countenance radiant with smiles, as she held out her hand. "I am so delighted you invited me to this sweet place. It is, I protest to you, really quite a Paradise."

"Believe me, my dear Lady Mary," commenced the poet, gallantly carrying the fair hand to his lips, and bowing over it, "I consider it so far like a Paradise, since the Adam it acknowledges has received an angel for a visitor."

"Thank you, Mr. Pope," she answered with an extremely graceful curtsy, and an arch look; "a vastly pretty form of welcome, upon my word; but as I have taken a long flight from town, I suppose there can be no harm in my resting my angelic wings." Saying this, her Ladyship threw herself into the nearest chair, and taking off her hat, with the same freedom flung it upon the table.

"Ah, my dear Lady Mary," cried her host, with a gaze of rapture upon her beautiful features, "you are determined to find rest; but will you ever accord it to those whom your charms prevent from gaining any?"

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the lady, glancing round with well-pleased surprise, "what a pretty place you've got, my dear Mr. Pope; and

all within so mighty elegant and tasteful ! On my word, I had scarcely conceived there could be any other species of dwelling for you poets than the higher stories of Grub-street. I vow there's a monstrous difference here. I'm not astonished you write such pretty verses when everything about you is so pretty. I was saying to that odious Lady Bab, t'other day, I wondered what secret you possessed for composing poetry so much superior to other people's. Lady Bab, who, you know, like your humble servant, is woefully efficient in that mighty useful commodity called rains, assured me that you were a Papist, and that the Pope had given you a dispensation, or an indulgence, plague on't, I forget which, to allow of the union of rhyme and reason, which had hitherto been considered as existing in the prohibited degrees of relationship in the writings of our modern poets."

Lady Mary laughed a very pretty laugh, that made her rosy mouth look a thousand times more enticing ; and of course Mr. Pope laughed also.

"My Lady Bab's conception is not more correct than your own assumption of mental insufficiency," he replied good-humouredly. "I certainly am what she styles a Papist ; but of dispensations

I know nothing, and of indulgences, the only one that would be useful to me, comes not from the Pontiff, but from my readers; to whose indulgence I confess I owe obligations of no ordinary character, though I will not go so far as to say that it has had the great influence on my writings your Ladyship is pleased to attribute to it. But poets, my dear Lady Mary, have, as you ought to be aware, mighty little to do with the Holy Father in the way of inspiration. It is not to man, even the greatest and holiest, that they look for assistance. The Muse is feminine, and is sure to procure some representative whose exquisite beauty is as truly the source of everything admirable in the poet's ideas, as is the radiant sun the primary cause of beauty in the flower, and sweetness in the fruit. For myself, I can say with a safe conscience, that whatever merit my writings may lay claim to, it must have its sole origin in that unutterable adoration I have ever felt for the dear sex in general—"

"Vastly good of you, upon my honour!" exclaimed the lady, carelessly playing with her fan.

"While waiting for the adorable individual," continued the poet with increasing fervour, "who

should condescend to separate herself from the mass of noisy worshippers, to receive the devotion of a spirit whose whole existence was bound up in his deep and faithful service."

"Lord Mr. Pope," cried Lady Mary starting up as if suddenly recognizing a portrait, "if here is not the picture of my Lord of Bolingbroke! I declare to you I passed it at first. Dear now, that I should be so stupid as not immediately to recognise so rare a likeness. Was ever such a silly wretch? I ought to be annihilated. I wonder his Lordship doesn't take me to task from the canvass; but I suppose the resemblance would not choose in anything to act unlike its well-bred original; and my Lord was ever the best of creatures to us poor women."

"Yes," added Mr. Pope, following his lively visitor to the place she had taken up opposite the picture that appeared so to have attracted her, "'tis a fine portrait of a rare original—a man with the noblest gifts and the finest faculties, who wanted only leisure to be a great philosopher as well as a distinguished statesman. Of the many noble friends it is my good fortune to possess, I look on my Lord Bolingbroke as one of whom I ought to be the most proud."

"Bless me!" exclaimed her Ladyship with a yawn, as she turned away to another object that attracted her attention, "what a sweet taste you have in china. I protest I never saw anything so charmingly ugly as these lions. My Lady Bab would give half her jointure to possess anything so curious; as she indulges in a delightful taste for collecting all the monstrosities she can meet with, and she now boasts of being able to beat any collection in the kingdom in the ugliness of her museum. You *must* go there, Mr. Pope."

Now the last sentence was said in the simplest manner in the world. Yet any one less in love by a great deal than her companion, might have detected a satirical tone that gave quite a different meaning to it, to that which it appeared to pos-

Lady Mary then made the round of the room, in the most animated way criticising this and commenting on that—her host following her erratic movements as closely as he conveniently could, explaining where explanation was needed, and by a number of amusing anecdotes in some way or other connected with the different things that excited his beautiful visitor's observation, endeavouring to entertain her. If anything could

be judged from the many bewitching smiles she bestowed upon him, and the innumerable little bursts of mirth that proceeded from her, his success could scarcely be doubted.

Her Ladyship seemed the very impersonation of happiness, and possessed of an inexhaustible flow of spirits, that could only have fair play with so intelligent a companion ; whilst of him it might truly be said, mortal man could not be better satisfied with himself, or more certain that the ravishing creature beside him was as much his own heart and soul as if she had already confessed it.

He increased his efforts to please, never failing, however, on every occasion that presented itself, in some indirect way to express the feelings that her Ladyship had so powerfully excited. His gallantry, warm as it sometimes seemed, was never checked. Perhaps it was replied to by some such exclamation as "provoking creature !" "tormenting devil !" "I protest, Mr. Pope, you are vastly complimentary !" "surely no woman ever resisted such monstrous fine things !" or any of the thousand and one little speeches to which pretty women have recourse when listening to a suitor who is not disagreeable to them.

At last when the circuit of the room had been made, and everything had received its due share of attention, and had contributed its quota to the very lively conversation that was going on, Lady Mary snatched up her hat as unceremoniously as she had thrown it down, and hastily putting it on before a mirror, declared her intention of viewing the garden. Her host, all complaisance and gallantry, immediately acceded to her whim, with various compliments suitable to the occasion ; and opening the glass doors they were quickly upon the lawn.

This was a new scene for the display of the lady's intense enjoyment ; and as she beheld the beautiful arrangement of the flowers and trees, the lawns and paths so different to the old-fashioned garden plots with which she was familiar ; her satisfaction burst forth in the most enthusiastic terms. She admired everything, she commended everything, and she was delighted with everything.

The poet as he walked by her side, appreciating her graceful gestures, and basking in her sunny smiles as to his enamoured fancy, her Ladyship floated amongst the flowers like some creature of a fairer world, was in the seventh heaven of

ecstasy. His step became elastic, his spirit elevated, and his voice unusually musical and tender, as he gave expression to the various classical ideas that crowded upon his mind, arising from the presence of so lovely a being among objects so full of beautiful associations.

Every flower that attracted her attention was immediately gathered, and presented to her with some well-expressed flattery, for which the imagery of the best poets of Greece and Rome was laid under contribution; and every observation seemed to lead to some peculiarly felicitous reference to the most sentimental legends connected with the heathen mythology. Lady Mary was quite at home in these scholastic compliments; and by her own allusions to the poets of the ancient world and their graceful fictions, contrived to keep up this pleasant strain during the whole of the time she remained in the garden.

To listen to the conversation, it would be impossible to imagine two minds so completely in unison. They appeared to think, and they appeared to feel alike; at least, so far they went together in admiration of the beautiful, and in a sympathy for all the tender impressions that arise from its contemplation. There was, or seemed a

ummary took him from
Ovid, to some picture
and as for the Poet
transport which his
pressed. In the course
he had ventured to use
passion his fair visitor
she replied to them in
mere matters of conversation
her eloquent looks the
impression.

In this humour the
During their absence
had been prepared for
hailed with quite as much
expressed at beholding
and with amazing alacrity
herself of all the evils

as teeth ; for while she attacked the breast of a chicken with something more than a fine lady's appetite, she rattled on in as lively a fashion as ever respecting what she had seen, and how delighted she was, and anything and everything she could contrive to talk about ; whilst her lover sat opposite to her too greatly excited by her fascinations to pay as much attention to his own share of the banquet, but drinking wine with his visitor and quoting Anacreon, and bringing forth the most sparkling witticisms, the most sententious thoughts, and the most poetical ideas that could be brought in in any way to advance his object.

Everything evidently encouraged the hope he so strongly entertained ; and the moment seemed approaching for him to make the decisive demonstration that should establish his triumph. Lady Mary ate and drank, and laughed and talked, as though the present moment was the happiest she had known. But a fine lady's appetite, even when excited by a pleasant walk, must at last be satisfied ; and after leaving the chicken for the patties, and the patties for the cheesecakes, her Ladyship appeared about to conclude with a last glass of wine, which the attentive host was pouring out for her, whilst quoting a French epigram more remarkable for its

wit than its delicacy, which she evidently enjoyed with no ordinary zest.

“Come, Mr. Pope, it’s vastly ungentle of you not to have offered me music with your banquet,” she observed, after putting down her glass. “But I see,” she added, pointing to a lute placed beside a chair, “you have provided an instrument, though not a musician. Egad, I wonder you were not satisfied with merely furnishing the decanters and so saved your wine.” She laughed one of her merry laughs at this.

“Your voice, my dear Lady Mary, is to me a music St. Cecilia could not have rivalled,” replied the poet.

“Oh, your humble servant!” answered the lady. “But as my voice is expected to do duty on this occasion instead of the customary flutes and haut-boys, harps and dulcimers; I think it might be employed more harmoniously than in replying to the legion of immensely pretty speeches you have been so good as to make to me since my arrival. As music I am determined to have, I shall make a virtue of necessity, and so honour you by supplying it myself.”

Her delighted host hastened to bring the lute, for which Lady Mary had risen from her chair, and

commencing a speech suited to such a moment, as he placed it in her hands.

"My dear Mr. Pope!" she exclaimed, running her fingers lightly over the strings, and carefully tuning them, "I am about to sing you a love song; and it is one that ought to be well regarded by every member of our weak sex, likely to come under the influence of man's beguiling tongue." There was a world of arch mockery in the sparkling very brilliant eyes, as this sentence was uttered by her; but before her companion could object to this *badinage*, she struck a few chords, in extremely sweet and plaintive tones, commenced:—

THE DESPAIRING SHEPHERDESS.

The silly sheep upon the mead,
Now wander where there may;
What them befall I take no heed,
I care not if they stray.
I hie me to some secret nook,
That's hid from ev'ry eye;
And there I lay aside my crook,
And there I sit and sigh.

My eyes have long been dim with grief,
My cheek is wan and pale;
My heart is as the autumn leaf,
That sports upon the gale.

Gone, gone ! is all the fond delight,
In happier hours it knew ;
And fled its dreams so fair and bright,
Since Damon proved untrue.

The lark shall sing above my head,
His requiem clear and sweet ;
The green-grass turf shall be my bed,
The earth my winding sheet.
And on the stone upon me laid,
These words my fate shall tell :—
“ Here rests at peace, a wretched maid,
Who lived, and loved—too well !”

The singer gave the ballad all its proper expression ; but doleful as it was, it seemed either to be foreign to her nature, or else assumed in mockery :—for no one could gaze on her beautifully expressive face, without perceiving that a struggle was there going on between the mirthful mood that was so natural to her, and the melancholy one she had only taken up with the melancholy ditty she was singing.

The struggle lasted however only as long as the song, for at the conclusion, the former triumphed very audibly, much to the relief of the listener, who would have better liked sentiments less despairing. He joined in the laugh as heartily as

Companion, and rallied her on her rustic taste ballads; vowed she would enchant the milk-maids by singing them so touching a strain, and tested the words were most unnatural, because it was quite impossible any Damon could be untrue to her. Then he launched out on the subject of the extreme felicity that must be the lot of so loved a mortal, and how extraordinary ought to be the devotion to her of the happy man distinguished by her regard. This led to a long and earnest speech on the happiness arising from mutual attachment, and instances were given coloured with the most poetical imagery of the supreme bliss enjoyed by those connected by such ties. But where he proceeded to state, the intellect was joined with the heart, the permanency and fervour of the affections were increased a hundred fold; and he added to the love of poets for their mistresses which had crowned both with an imperishable renown, referring to Petrarch and Laura, and to Dante and Beatrice, in language of the most imagined tenderness.

The brilliant eyes of his fair visitor, shone more brightly upon him than ever, and her smile seemed to have acquired a sweeter expression, she with an audible sigh expressed how prodigiously she envied Laura such a lover, and how

undeservedly she thought he had been rewarded for his devotion.

This acknowledgment completely thrust aside the restraint the poet had hitherto contrived to put on his all-absorbing passion ; and in an instant he was in the most graceful attitude he could put himself into, at the knees of Lady Mary, with eyes flashing with exultation, and breast throbbing with pleasure, pouring out a resistless tide of the most enamoured language to which fond poet ever gave expression. He had taken her hand, he had covered it with burning kisses ; he had called her the most endearing names to be found in the copious vocabulary of Love ; and he had vowed to devote himself, heart and soul, to her happiness, and to exert the best energies of his brain to do her honour.

The poet was running on in the most passionate declaration poet ever expressed ; words scarcely seeming to come fast enough, so rapid was the flow of his ideas ; when pausing to take breath, his attention was caught by sounds, which the engrossing nature of his occupation and the position of his face continually pressed to the hand he had so fondly seized, had previously prevented him from hearing ; and looking up, his con-

tion may be imagined, when he beheld the object of his worship vainly striving with engaged hand to stifle a fit of irrepressible air that had seized her.

impassioned lover was on his feet in a moment, wearing a look as opposite as darkness to the adoration that a moment since had animated every feature.

"Oh, Mr. Pope!" exclaimed the lady, now giving full scope to her mischievous mirth, as she rose from her chair, and rapidly threw on her

"I vow and protest I never was so entertained in all my life! If I live an age I shall never forget it. You must surely have been through many lessons, or you never could have gone through the scene with such prodigious clever-

ness. Another burst of laughter proceeded from her as she hastily prepared for departure, whilst her silent admirer stood scowling before her, dumb with mortification and astonish-

"Your most obedient, my dear Mr. Pope!" she said in her sweetest tones, curtsying to him and then opened the door. He acknowledged the compliment by a haughty bend of the head; his heart

safer say, I shall never do
Once more, Mr. Pope, you

The door opened, and c
soon in her sedan, and ca
the water-side, where the
boat; but the pretty jilt
her return to town, befor
enamoured poet recovere
heartly execration, and s
though he felt himself bru

END OF VI

MAIDS OF HONOUR:

A TALE

OF

THE COURT OF GEORGE I.

"One thing I have got by the long time I have been here, which is, the being more sensible than ever I was of my happiness in being *Maid of Honour*: I wont say 'God preserve me so,' neither; that would not be so well."—SUFFOLK CORRESPONDENCE.

IN THREE VOLS.

VOL. III.

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1845.

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MAIDS OF HONOUR.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUPPER OF THE AUTHORS.

Here sauntering prentices o'er Otway weep,
O'er Congreve smile, or over D'Urfey sleep.
Pleased sempstresses the Lock's famed Rape unfold,
And Squirts read Garth till apozems grow old.

GAY.

JACOB TONSON was a happy man. At least he was as near happiness as a bookseller could be. He had sold many books, and he had published a few, and the books he had sold, and the books he had published had turned out equally profitable. Jacob Tonson had a heart; if it did not exactly overflow with "the milk of human kindness," it might boast of an average produce.

Some ill natured people had said that the milk was the merest skim ; but the accusation had been traced to an unsuccessful author—an authority of course that was not to be depended on.

As, has just been said, Jacob Tonson had a heart, he was conscientious—very conscientious for a bookseller. He had made immense gains by a select coterie of authors, whose works he introduced to the public—men who burned the midnight oil in the arduous toil of thought, undeniably as it proved with no other aim than the prosperity of the bookseller. These were poets, scholars, divines, and philosophers; men of acknowledged wit, learning, fancy, and wisdom, who conferred no less honour on the age than they brought profit to the publisher. It was for them the milk of his human kindness overflowed like a horse-pond after a storm.

He had been moved by certain reflections that had visited him on glancing through his author's account-book, to acknowledge, in some appropriate way, the obligations he lay under to the most successful members of his literary staff. He did not take a very long time to consider what way would be most appropriate. With the knowledge that long experience had given him, he re-

that nothing could be more desirable to than a good meal. But as his hospitality not be allowed to interfere with his business, he determined on giving them a supper—a repast could easily be prepared after the shop was closed and possessed the further advantage of not obliging the host in any very great expenditure. Though Jacob Tonson knew well how high was their appreciation of such practical generosity he was also assured that men who cultivate their intellects ought not to be very nice in the regulation of their appetites. Good, wholesome food and plenty of it, with a fair supply of exhilarations of an inexpensive nature, ought to be, according to his notions, the most excellent author; and these, with the help of his porter, and his housekeeper, he resolved to procure.

He then arranged the nature of the feast, the thing to decide was who were to be the

He was getting into the vale of years—his hair and face had begun to assume the aspect of an all-ruled day-book: there were lines imprinted thereon showing how that great creditor, Time, kept a running account with him of which

Jacob, by the way, intended to put off a settlement till the very last moment—till he paid the only debt with him, as ill-natured people said, certain of an adjustment—the great debt of Nature. Yet he was as active as younger men, particularly where his own interests were concerned; and, though a sober citizen with a staid serious demeanour, and wearing the most simple business like apparel, he could unbend upon an occasion in pleasant company—particularly when he was put to no expense—and appear as fresh and as gay as a cock canary just moulted.

He called for the stock ledger, which, when the boy handed up to him, where he sat on a high stool at a tall desk at the end of his shop—a book nearly as big as himself—Jacob Tonson turned over the folios, carefully looked at the figures at the end of each account, and according as they were on the wrong or right side, pronounced on the eligibility of the party for the invitation.

He found several whose books had not been attended with so favourable a result as had been wished by both parties. Very little consideration was given to them. Indeed, the publisher looked upon them as a sort of lepers in the world of lit-

terary enterprise, whom he could not too carefully avoid. Those whose works had been but slightly profitable he hesitated about. Small profits were but small virtues in the eyes of Jacob Tonson ; his philanthropy might induce him to pay such persons the compliment of an invitation, but he felt, honest man, he could not esteem them.

Where the figures showed handsome returns, the eyes of the bookseller seemed to expand with the excess of his admiration. The names on the top of each page were such as Jacob delighted to honour. They belonged to men against whom not a word could be said ; they formed the *libro d'oro* in use "at the sign of the Shakspeare's Head over against Catherine Street in the Strand."

The invitations were at last sent out, and Jacob Tonson in the fullness of his satisfaction at the goodness of the deed he had determined on, opened his heart to one or two of his best customers whilst, as usual, they were gossiping with him in the shop respecting books and their authors. Whether he succeeded in all instances in impressing upon these persons a full sense of his extreme amiability, has not been ascertained. One individual, at least, took a decided interest

in the subject. He was the reader's very fashionable acquaintance Handsome Hervey, who besides putting forth the indisputable pretensions we have recorded as the best dressed gentleman at Court, aspired to know and be known in the world of literature. He was often at the bookseller's; but as he came to buy, he was of course a welcome visitor. Jacob was proud of such a customer, and frequently endeavoured to entertain him with some of his abundant reminiscences of Pope, Addison, Swift, and other literary magnates of his acquaintance.

Handsome Hervey appeared delighted with the notion of Jacob Tonson's "supper of the authors," as he was pleased to style the proposed banquet. The milk of human kindness must have been very creamy in Jacob at that moment, for he cordially asked the beau to join the company, and promised to direct his attention to the most distinguished of the many celebrated characters he should have the honour of entertaining. His Lordship seemed prodigiously grateful; and as some acknowledgment of so great a favour, ordered half-a-dozen of the worthy bookseller's most unsaleable publications.

At the period we are seeking to illustrate, no-

were not generally such rigid conservators of dignity as they assume to be now ; and what was thought a valid plea for conduct on these days would be pronounced *ex-
infra dig.* It should also be remembered, though Jacob Tonson kept a shop, he was a respectable personage ; possessed a country house at Barnes, and as Secretary to the Kit-Kat Club, on friendly terms with its members, and the guests that his Lordship had been introduced to meet, were several gentlemen who were in the habit of associating with some of the most distinguished persons in the kingdom.

On the appointed evening, the beau, dressed with much care as if he were about to pay a visit to his mistress, was set down from his carriage at the sign of the Shakspeare's Head. When the shop closed, he knocked, and was soon admitted by the boy, who bawled his greeting in a penny-trumpet voice, that gave no offence to the gentleman's sense of dignity. On passing into the supper-room, ushered by the housekeeper with her best curtesy, and her most cordial smile, Jacob hailed him from the parlour without his wig, in his shirt sleeves, and with one shoe and one slipper on, and begged he

would sit down for two or three minutes, till he had completed his toilet.

Finding he was the first arrival, Handsome Hervey amused himself by inspecting the preparations for the coming entertainment. To the fastidious fine gentleman of the Court, there was much in these preparations that excited his astonishment. A capacious table had been covered with its table cloth, and furnished with a long row of knives and forks, varying so much in their appearance, as to suggest to the observer the idea of their all belonging to different parishes. Pewter pepper-castors, and white delf salt-cellars were to be seen at each corner, flanked with large pewter spoons; except at the head of the table, where a pair of table-spoons of genuine silver, were ostentatiously paraded for the sole use and benefit of the most profitable of Jacob Tonsen's guests.

Occasionally there entered the room the sturdy porter in his Sunday suit:—a large paper copy of humanity in plain binding; the slim boy, in a duodecimo pepper-and-salt jacket, with yellow smalls; and the tall housekeeper in her best grogram gown, looking like a quarto pamphlet in a neat cover. Used to the royal livery, and royal ser-

vitors, "Handsome Hervey," scrutinized the, to him, singular appearance and awkward movements of his host's domestics, as though he doubted in his own mind amongst what strange animals he had ventured. They appeared to be marvellously busy about the supper arrangements; but as they invariably glanced to where the silver spoons were placed, the beau could not but think their visits arose from their anxiety for the safety of so unusual a part of their master's table service. He laughed a little at his thoughts, and would have laughed a great deal more had he known the long debate that had been held between his careful host, and his equally careful housekeeper on the production of those articles of the precious metal. The good woman seemed to be afraid they might prove too great a temptation for some of the company; but her master trusted in Providence and his own sharp eyes, and had decided on letting the silver appear.

The room was far from being extensive, and a considerable portion was now taken up by several large parcels in brown paper, which were either supplies of books ready for immediate demand, or parcels of those publications for which a ready sale was not anticipated. They had not been re-

moved because there was no convenient place to which to remove them; and it was thought by Jacob Tonson that they might be left where they were without creating any fear of their being carried off by his guests.

Handsome Hervey had just completed his survey, when his host entered in a new wig, and a coat almost as good as new. In short, Jacob Tonson looked extremely respectable:—a new edition of himself revised and corrected. He was particularly courteous in his welcome to his fashionable visitor, and then glanced at the table with the air of a man not inclined to be too proud, yet having a full appreciation of his own greatness.

“Ah!” exclaimed Jacob, with that peculiar sense of satisfaction a great mind experiences when engaged in a great cause, “this cannot but prove a delightful entertainment. A classic symposium, my Lord Hervey, in which minds that belong to the highest order of intellects shall associate, and elicit those divine sparks which arise only when genius comes in collision with genius. Is the beef nearly done, Mrs. Skewball?” the speaker suddenly demanded, as his portly housekeeper entered the room. The reply satisfied the master of the feast, and he went on.

“I shall have an opportunity of introducing our Lordship to some of the lights of the age:—lights that are destined under my humble auspices, to illumine the world. For instance there my epic poet, Mr. Tagrhyme. Wonderful!—marvellous capacity!—surprising imagination!—extraordinary invention! A sort of man, Lord Hervey, made up of the several excellences of Homer, Virgil, Tasso, and Milton. I the fortunate publisher of his admirable,—I say matchless—epic, the “The Day of Judgment,” in twenty books; an intellectual marvel—an achievement in letters not to be paralleled in a century. Yes, my Lord Hervey, you shall see the great Mr. Tagrhyme; and your children’s children may boast of the honour you have received.

And your Lordship shall see the pious Dr. Text, whose last volume of sermons may be reckoned to as an invaluable digest of Christian doctrine. Admirable divine;—rare theologian! eminent preacher! And then too your Lordship will enjoy the opportunity of forming the acquaintance of the truly illustrious Heavypage, the noted author of the ‘The History of the World before the Flood,’ and ‘The Secret Memoirs

of the Preadamite Kings.' Stupendous learning! —invincible reasoning! —boundless knowledge!"

Handsome Hervey had heard nothing of these prodigies. Although he occasionally elevated his eye-brows as he looked and listened, it seemed to his host that he looked forward with immense gratification to the society so ostentatiously promised him.

"I must not forget," continued the worthy bookseller, "the marvellous scholar, Dr. Drybones, the professor of Greek Literature, whose volume on the "Pleasures and Advantages of studying the true Athenian Pronunciation" is a masterpiece of erudition. With him will doubtless come Slipslop, the romance writer, whose "Innocent Adultery" in ten volumes has been so well received. Pretty writer, my Lord Hervey; very pretty writer, indeed. Understands the human heart. Must be immortal!" Then he hastily added, turning suddenly round, "Tell Mrs. Skewball to be sure to mind the orders I gave her about the punch."

"Yes, Sir," said the boy in yellow smalls, to whom the last sentence of Jacob Tonson's speech was addressed on his entering the room with the snuffers.

Then, my Lord, I expect Trounce, the satirist and Bumblebee, the pamphleteer. Powerful writers, my Lord. Wonderful, powerful writers! Every body reads them. They exercise a vast influence over public opinion. Trounce is a great rogue who abuses every body, and of course every body runs to see what is said about him. Bumblebee is a patriot; writes inflammatory essays to shew that ruin is impending over the nation, and of course, with the whole nation so justly popular."

In the same enthusiastic strain Jacob Tonson proceeded to mention the rest of his expected guests, and Handsome Hervey appeared particularly well pleased to recognise amongst them names so familiar as Addison, De Foe, Dean Swift, Sir Richard Steele, and Sir John Vanbrugh. He had also invited Mr. Pope, as he took care to inform his new friend: but that gentleman excused himself on the plea of sudden indisposition. This disappointment, however, he had been enabled to qualify, by having, during the last four-and-twenty hours, secured as a guest a distinguished foreigner, who, though not exactly a French author, had considerable taste in the *Belles Lettres*, and was deservedly famous for his skill

in one of the polite arts; this person was the fashionable portrait painter, Sir Godfrey Kneller.

The beau had scarcely been made acquainted with these particulars, to which he listened with well-affected curiosity, when the guests began to arrive. Jacob knew his business too well to cry stinking-fish; and though some of his manufactures were in much less demand than others, he took care to give even the worst that degree of commendation that might influence a purchaser. Nevertheless, his Lordship, in an indirect way, managed to elicit as nearly as possible the degrees of estimation in which they all stood with their publisher, and the causes that led to such variation.

But had he been at a loss, the manner in which Jacob Tonson received his guests would have opened his eyes to the real state of the case. To the Small Profits he behaved like a patron. He was not only civil, he was gracious; and there was a sort of benignity in his condescension, that declared how much he thought it was his duty to notice those writers in his employ who did not happen to be so fortunate in their undertakings as others. But yet there was something in his bearing that

lainly told them he knew his own value as well as theirs.

Jacob discriminated in an ingenious sliding-scale, according to the productiveness of the artists, till he arrived at the great men whose names sold editions almost as rapidly as they could be printed. With these he never thought of attempting the familiarity with which he treated the Small Profits. He welcomed Mr. Addison with the respect due to a prince; whilst the epic poet, who, notwithstanding the laboured logic he had uttered, sold very slowly, was obliged to be contented with a careless "Ha! rhyme, how are ye, my boy?"

His Lordship was introduced in due form to the authors as they made their appearance. He had previously made the acquaintance of Addison and Sir John Vanbrugh; and after his peculiar fashion contrived to join in conversation with the caustic Dean and the humourous eccle, whilst the feast was getting ready. Most of them assembled together in little groups, discussing the news of the King's journey to Harver; of the singular disappearance, and still more strange recovery of the Maid of Honour; and of the expected trial of Bishop Atterbury

in the House of Peers: and some violent politicians were very severe upon the South Sea Scheme, which had already excited considerable distrust in the public mind.

The gaunt figure of the epic poet stood apart, his cadaverous visage looking abstracted, as, with his arms crossed, he gazed upon the ceiling. The theologian sat at a little distance, as though he beheld the most orthodox of religious systems definitely settled in his shoe-buckles. The pamphleteer and the satirist were declaiming to each other on the vices of society; and ministers were spoken of by them in about as courteous terms as a discharged valet would mention his master; but as one lisped and the other stammered, their language was not very readily understood.

Jacob Tonson went from one to another, laughing freely with the illustrious obscure, and exhibiting the most amiable deference to such as Fame had entered in his *libro d'oro*. He hung upon the words of the two chief contributors to the *Spectator*, as though they were as manna to his soul; the architect of Blenheim uttered a few jokes, which would scarcely have been thought good enough for the dullest of his plays, yet Jacob enjoyed them.

immensely. The author of *Gulliver's Travels* could not mention the most simple circumstance, but Jacob was convinced there was hidden satire in it, and he severely taxed the small power of his brain to find it out; even the little attempts at a jest made in unintelligible English by the fashionable foreign portrait painter appeared to obtain from him the fullest appreciation.

At last the labours of Mrs. Skewball, the house-keeper, of the porter turned butler, and of the boy footman, had progressed as far as placing the viands on the table; and the company heard the welcome words "Supper is ready." Handsome Hervey was not long in discovering that his host had applied his sliding-scale appreciation to the supper arrangement. At the head of the table, where Jacob and his great friends sat, there were the delicacies of the season; good substantial fare was to be found at the middle of the table, and economy reigned supreme at the lower end. Those gentlemen whose works obtained immense success might indulge in venison; the authors who could only lay claim to a more moderate sale, might enjoy their boiled beef; but the Small Profits were expected to rest content on tripe and cow-heel.

Jacob Tonson, happy man! prided himself on the felicity of this arrangement. It was a master-stroke of policy; and as he carved with respectful attention for the distinguished persons around him, he felt the most ecstatic satisfaction at the prospect he beheld of enjoying, to his heart's content, his favourite cut in the alderman's walk, as soon as he had served the six or seven privileged individuals for whom the venison had been intended.

His Lordship, Sir Godfrey, Sir Richard, and Sir John, had been attended to with a due pronunciation of their titles; the Dean was as carefully provided for; Addison and De Foe were also of the privileged few: but below them, the host never thought of proceeding. To his extreme astonishment, however, although the boiled beef was right before him, the pamphleteer sent up his plate for venison. Bumblebee was not a person to be offended, and the haunch was carved for him without a word; the satirist, also, actually did the same thing. Of Trounce, Jacob stood in considerable awe; and he thought it prudent to postpone his own attentions to the haunch till he had satisfied his formidable friend's inclinations.

He could hardly believe his eyes or his ears when, immediately afterwards, Slipslop, in the coolest manner possible, told the boy in yellow smalls to bring him "some of the haunch." Jacob could not make it out at all. The boiled beef was so near Slipslop, he might help himself; and there seemed to him no slight presumption in a romance writer asking for venison. But Jacob thought it might seem ungracious to refuse, and therefore complied to the extraordinary request with the best grace he could assume.

Greater surprises were in store for him. Not only did Dr. Drybones follow the examples so ably set him; but the tripe and cow-heel obtained no more attention than the beef, for even the epic poet and the theologian had the impertinence to send the boy footman for a supply from the top of the table. The milk of human kindness in Jacob Tonson began to turn a little sour at such prodigious ingratitude; but when he heard the hollow voice of Tagrhyme, after he had been helped to a delicious slice with a fair allowance of gravy, asking *for a taste of the fat*, he really felt himself entertaining an extremely ill opinion of human nature. That an epic poet whose work scarcely paid its expenses, should

not be satisfied with a choice between tripe and cow-heel, was marvellous. If his ambition had soared to the boiled beef, he should have considered it monstrous bad taste, but submitted to it as an eccentricity of genius; but to dare to think of venison, and having dared, to exceed all belief, by asking for "a taste of the fat," was an atrocity altogether unparalleled.

Jacob made a solemn determination never to invite an epic poet to his table again. He was half inclined to give up publishing for such persons; but Jacob would not allow himself to be so unjust, particularly as he might be a considerable loser by it. He would, however, be very careful of entering into any further speculations with Tagrhyme, notwithstanding the very high opinion he had expressed of his writings.

The treatment the hospitable bookseller had met with from some of his authors would have prevented his eating, had he not refrained longer than usual from breaking his fast, that he might have the greater enjoyment in the flavour of his beloved "alderman's walk." He was now about to commence satisfying his appetite, when he chanced to observe that his distinguished friends near him again required his services as carver.

his noble friend on his right, who strange had scarcely eat a mouthful.

"My Lord, you don't eat!" exclaimed the table host, marvelling greatly his prime joint should be so little appreciated by his principal. "I hope the venison's to your Lorship's

ah! yes, Tonson," drawled out the Ex- with an imperturbable countenance. "I thank you, Tonson; but I never go beyond mouthfuls of animal food—never, Tonson,

ison and one or two more, who knew his ship's affectations, could not forbear smiling; the Dean laughed aloud.

"Jove! that's just my way, or very near," exclaimed, "I seldom take more than a mouthful or two of such diet; but then it should be remembered, I take prodigious good care first to satisfy the demands of my appetite."

"Appetite, Mr. Dean," cried the Beau, with a puzzled air, that much increased the mirth of the laughing neighbours. "What is an appe-

"Will you take a little beef, my Lord?" said the Beau, shouted the learned Heavypage, from

inquiry directed to him. "Y
Sir, that I never eat beef, Sir
any of those things, Sir."

"This is capital venison, .
Addison, as if to divert atten
cious announcement that had

"A very fine haunch," obse

"Couldn't be better," added

Jacob smiled, and chatted, :
greatly delighted at the prai
vished upon the fast disappea
one end of the table to the otl
sepulchral voice of the author
Judgment" joined in these tax
dations. The milk of human
tremely acidulous, for though
spiteful man, the hospitable b

begin, he was never more mistaken. The tiger who tastes blood is never satisfied till he has devoured his victim. So it was with those who had just become acquainted with the flavour of venison. One after another like the horse-leech, they cried "give! give!" and Jacob suffering a martyrdom of disgust and indignation, saw the whole haunch disappear down their voracious jaws without obtaining a morsel for himself. The epic poet having with a greediness he considered truly horrible, applied for the last piece.

Jacob Tonson looked unutterable things. He found too late instead of having a King Log, he had set up a King Stork in the voracious Tag-rhyme, who filled the chair at the opposite end of the table. He did not think that any bookseller had ever been so ill used by his authors and the enormity of the Small Profits had such an effect upon him, that for some time he found himself unable to commence his supper. He tried to look pleased. He did his best to get up a laugh at the Dean's jests. He endeavoured to pay a proper degree of attention to the pleasant anecdotes of Sir Richard Steele. He made believe he was interested in the account Sir John Vanbrugh was giving Sir Godfrey Kneller, of the

imagine he was absorbed in going on between Addison and was otherwise employed. He of the unpleasant feelings that in his breast, by the atrocious epic poet.

After some time had elapsed mind to be contented with a boiled beef. As soon as the great top of the supper table became bone, a very brisk attack commenced on the small centre joint, led on by the satirist. From such examples the Greek professors were not their neighbours helped them with zeal, and the beef was soon going the way of the haunch.

the sturdy porter was then assisting the portly housekeeper, and he saw all his neighbours so completely occupied by their conversation, that he could not make up his mind to interrupt them.

Just then an appeal was made to him by his intelligent friend De Foe, respecting the point he was discussing with Mr. Addison, and the matter took up his attention for several minutes. As it terminated, the boy in yellow smalls entered with a very smeary mouth, and received his master's plate and directions for boiled beef. Alas for Jacob Tonson! the hungry authors at the other end of the table had, by this time, stripped the small joint of every thing eatable. To add to the already brimming cup of his indignation, the epic poet insisted on sending him some of the untouched pe, to which he invited him with a degree of alting cordiality, that made his voice a thousand times more hateful to his patron than be-

he worthy bookseller tried to pick a bit of the ; for he had scarcely eat anything all day ; t had got cold, and appeared so unpalateable, Jacob after vainly endeavouring to conquer elings found himself obliged to send his plate

away. The portly housekeeper and the sturdy porter quickly removed the meats for the pastry; and a rich plum pudding at top, an excellent apple pie in the centre, and a dish of plain dumplings at the end, again betrayed to the observant beau the graduated estimation in which Jacob Tonson held his authors. But the hospitable bookseller had again the mortification of finding his able arrangements set at nought. The plum pudding and then the pie were devoured; but the dumplings were sent away untouched.

Jacob having learned by experience the unprofitableness of neglecting himself, had taken care to transfer to his own plate a liberal slice of the rich plum pudding; but just as he had succeeded in doing so, the Dean drew off his attention by some question respecting the sale of his books, which having answered he turned to enjoy his pudding, and was just in time to see the boy in yellow smalls handing his plate with its rich contents to the insatiate Tagrhyme.

The unfortunate host in fact eat no supper. He still made superhuman efforts to appear pleased, but his smile was distorted and his laugh hysterical. One consolation, however, remained to him. He knew he had arranged the drink-

part of the feast in a manner that could allow of the lower end of the table acting so scandalously as they had done with the eatables. It was his unprejudiced opinion that the Smallcoats ought to be satisfied with small beer; but on such an occasion he thought he would allow the milk of human kindness its full influence, and expected they should be furnished with a more generous malt liquor; and moreover, after the meal he had provided them with a bowl of punch, the size of that which should be placed at the same time at the head of the table. There was, however, a slight difference between the two bowls, which may as well be mentioned; and this is that the contents of one had not half the strength of the other.

After thanksgiving had been made by the Dean,

bowls were placed one at each end of the table, and glasses were filled as expeditiously as possible. The conversation was beginning to be extremely animated; and Jacob made a powerful effort to get rid of his disagreeable feelings. In the immediate neighbourhood of such choice spirits Swift, Steele, Vanbrugh, and the rest of his honoured friends, any bookseller might feel delighted. A smart fire of jests already made itself

heard, and the reign of pleasant anecdote had commenced. Jacob filled for all this amusing circle, and then proposed a loyal toast, without in the least betraying the state of his feelings. The toast was responded to very readily; but a singular circumstance followed; for as his immediate neighbours put down their glasses, they appeared to glance at each other with rather a strange expression of countenance. In fact, the Dean winked at Steele, and Sir John Vanbrugh looked at his glass in a peculiar manner.

“Come, Sir Godfrey,” said Steele, nudging his elbow, “I must get you to exercise your well known penetration in matters of taste, and tell the company why, on excellent authority, we should consider this bowl of punch peculiarly blessed.”

“I not know—I not know at all,” replied the artist with a shrug. “*Mon Dieu!* I am not possible to tell vat de bowl of punch shall be blessed for; unless it shall be for having such good companie.”

“Not exactly.”

“Vell den tell me; for I am mosh too stoopid to guess.”

“Haven’t we been told that ‘blessed are the

it;' and surely never was punch so
d for a blessing."

was loud and general, and the Dean
as heartily as any; but Addison
tle reproof to his friend for the pro-
jest.

nson could not exactly understand
ant; but he was not long allowed to
norance; for the boy in yellow smalls
ade his appearance at his elbow and
in a whisper that might be heard by
m, "Please, Sir, Mrs. Skewball says
the best bowl at t'other end o' the

; an agonising glance in that direction,
sily perceive, by the delighted coun-
there beheld, as the happy authors
their glasses to be replenished, that
ake had been made, and that the
s were absolutely enjoying the strong
for his own select circle. This was
blow. The unhappy bookseller be-
esperate. He sent for the spirit bot-
cely knowing what he was about, made
l as strong again as that of which he
he considered, so infamously deprived;

and when it was exhausted made another equally excellent. Of these he drank as often as he could fill his glass, and of how many more he partook there is no knowing ; for as he drank freely on an empty stomach, he soon became extremely singular in his proceedings.

The last thing of which he was conscious, was hearing Tagrhyme reciting a favourite passage from the last book of "The Day of Judgment ;" whilst the theologian, in a similar state of pleasant excitement, was singing an extremely uproarious kind of song, in which the whole of the Small Profits joined in a very noisy chorus.

The amiable host was carried up to bed in a state of insensibility, whilst his friends below were emptying his spirit bottles in repeated bowls, and in other ways amusing themselves at the expense of their entertainer. Handsome Hervey and the more select party at the head of the table separated at a reasonable hour, and enjoyed themselves moderately. Of the many witty things that were said by them, it is vain attempting to give the reader anything like an adequate idea ; we can only say that Addison acknowledged he had passed the pleasantest evening he had known since his ambitious marriage with the Countess of

Warwick ; and the Dean made a humorous report of it in doggrel verse, for the amusement of his fair friend "Stella." The rest of the company, however, having voted the epic poet into the chair the Dean had vacated, chose to keep it up ; and as long as there remained anything in the bottles, they continued to astonish the domestic staff of their publisher with the extravagance of their joviality.

The first sensation the unfortunate Jacob Tonsen experienced, was one of intense fear. He imagined himself to be the Prophet Jonah on the point of being cast from a ship, whilst a whale, with the hateful features of the epic poet, lay beneath ready to swallow him at a mouthful. He woke in affright—to fall asleep again, to fancy himself St. George engaged in mortal combat with the Dragon on a steep rock ; but the immense reptile had the best of it ; and just as he came, distending his monstrous jaws, belging fire and brimstone, to take him at a mouthful, he again recognized the cadaverous look of Tagrhyme, and it gave so terrible a shock to his system that he fell out of bed, and under the impression he had fallen down a precipice, raised such an outcry as made the boy in yellow smalls tremble in his

pallet under the counter, fully convinced that thieves had broken into the house.

In justice to Jacob, we must add that he soon became reconciled to his epic poet, and to the rest of his guests, whose seeming abuse of his kindness had produced so powerful an effect upon him; nay more, very shortly after his memorable "supper of the authors," he was again "on hospitable thoughts intent." He had the wisdom this time, however, and ever after, to dispense with all invidious distinctions. He played the part of the generous host to every one at his table; and it is to be hoped, though there exists some evidence to the contrary, at last made himself famous amongst his literary friends for his considerateness towards them as much on business as on festive occasions.

CHAPTER II.

A COURT PASTORAL.

How would the crook beseem thy lily hand ?
 How would my younglings, gazing round thee, stand ?
 Oh ! witless younglings, gaze not on her eye,
 Thence all my sorrow, thence the death I die.

AMBROSE PHILIPS.

OF the many lovely places in the neighbourhood of Richmond, Hampton Court, if not the most delightful for its scenery, is undoubtedly so for its associations. The palace of the great Cardinal, a building so stamped with his mastermind, had been greatly approved of by George I ; and when he left the country for his Hanoverian dominions, his son made it his summer residence.

The Prince having been appointed Guardian of

the Kingdom, was invested with all the state and authority of King : indeed the Court, through the influence of the Princess, was more brilliant than it had ever been under the government of her father-in-law : there being a brilliant staff of lords, equerries, grooms, sergeants-at-arms, gentlemen pensioners, pages, and other officers of the household in attendance on the Prince ; and of course, as gay an assemblage of ladies, maids of honour, and other gentlewomen attending on the Princess.

Her Royal Highness seemed disposed to make the most of her new honours, though she had no slight difficulty in getting her consort to play the dignified part she desired. He had little taste for ceremonies, and particularly disliked all the encumbrances of state. He cared as little for the luxuries of his high position ; for he chose to sleep on a hair-mattrass, and was always the plainest dressed man in the royal apartments. When obliged to play his part in the imposing spectacles of royalty, he did so with ill-disguised disinclination, with awkward bearing, and with a countenance expressive of anything but graciousness or satisfaction. Yet he could employ some efforts to render himself agreeable. He took

ast deal of pains to recommend himself to youthful beauties in attendance on his consort, exceeding even so far as to sing amorous French songs to them; which however, it ought not to be forgotten were more likely to spoil their ears than corrupt their morals.

He was amazingly civil to all of them: but distinguished most Mary Bellenden and Mary Noel, to whom he was most assiduous with his busy gallantries. The girls laughed at him. The royalty was not likely to influence them in their affections; for though he seemed ambitious of being taken for a rake, he was the least seducing of any who possessed that character.

The Princess did not condescend to notice her husband's attention to her attendants; but she took care, soon after her elevation, to read them a very sensible lesson on their behaviour to his Royal Highness, in the presence of her "good Howard," against whom some of her reflections and observations fell in a manner not at all unlikely to create an extremely uncomfortable impression. In the meantime, busied herself with a hundred things she thought necessary to keep up her consort's and her own importance; at one moment patronizing and flattered, at another ingratiating herself with

her ladies, at a third rendering herself as popular as possible with the great body of the English people.

Her Royal Highness dined in public, allowing any person to enter the state apartments at the time she was being served in strict accordance with etiquette, on the knee, by three of her ladies, her cupbearer, carver, and sewer. It formed a most imposing ceremonial ; and her allowing the public admission to it, greatly increased the popularity of the Court. There was nothing but hatred and contempt heaped upon the ugly minions of the sovereign ; but the people seemed now never tired of expressing their admiration of the Princess of Wales and her ladies.

The Maids of Honour were in the highest estimation at Hampton Court ; they were much favoured by the Princess ; they were the constant objects of the Prince's regard, and they were wonderfully esteemed by the courtiers. The Brigadier's daughter, in consequence of her recent adventure, was more than ever the subject of conversation, and of the assiduous attentions of three or four of the most desirable beaux the palace could boast of.

The Duke of Wharton fancied he was gaining

ground. He had omitted nothing which might have assisted his views upon the youthful beauty, and believed that his tender assiduities had made a favourable impression. He took care always to be in the front rank of her numerous suitors, and did his best to make them believe he possessed her favour.

Next came Philip Dormer, seeking less ostentatiously to make his way to the heart of the Brigadier's daughter. His gallantries were of the most graceful kind. They displayed all a courtier's elegance, with the refinement of an accomplished mind. They were more dangerous than the more impassioned attentions of the profligate young Duke, whose fervour, however, after the first impression, was thrown away upon a nature so remarkable for its delicacy as that of Mary Lepel.

The Duke of Buckingham, whenever his gout would permit, was equally ready to enter into the field; and though he never failed to deride the amorous glances and tender speeches of his wheezing rival, the Duke of Somerset, who, to do him justice, repaid his derision with interest, he sought every occasion that presented itself to recommend himself to the notice of the young Maid of Honour as the most devoted of her adorers.

The conduct of these antiquated *Lecheres* still afforded an inexhaustible fund of amusement to their younger rivals; but they did not shrink from running the gauntlet of jests their folly brought upon them. Indeed they seemed delighted with any notice that was taken of their amorous vagaries.

Other gentlemen presented themselves in the suite of the youthful beauty, and considered their attentions well repaid if they managed to obtain a smile or a look. If, by some fortunate chance, one succeeded in handing her to her chair, in recovering a dropped pocket-handkerchief, or in restoring a strayed lap-dog, he was made happy for a month, and did not fail to let it be known at his club how mightily he had been favoured by "the matchless Molly Lepel."

Mary Bellenden too, continued to draw around her a throng of lovers such as ought to have made her amends for all that she had lost in leaving Paris; and as in the case of her fair schoolfellow, amongst them were to be found gallants of all ages, from the old Lord Chamberlain, whose compliments savoured somewhat too strongly of dotage, to the boyish Page whom a kind word or a sweet smile metamorphosed into an adorer.

she had at Hampton Court full employment—those inimitable fascinations her French had procured for her ; and the crowd of lovers who flocked to the palace as soon as it was known that the Prince possessed the power, buzzed about the Maids of Honour like a swarm of bees upon a parterre of flowers.

The Prince became more warm in his attention, as a natural consequence Colonel Arden was distant. In fact his Royal Highness, gave a due share of his peculiar comfort to each of the Court beauties, bestowed impressively upon Lord Bellenden's daughter, so no one could help coming to the conclusion that he entertained a passion for her. Colonel saw this as clearly as the shrewdest man in Court. He saw also how completely the Princess was besieged by admirers ; and not to be lost in the crowd, he withdrew to a room, as if he had completely given up the

Howe was as dashing and reckless as she also had her train ; and they were, at the least creditable suitors so young and beautiful a creature could have had about her. The

age, however, was far from being discriminative, and Sophy Howe was among the most heedless of her sex. She allowed the attentions of a crowd of well-known rakes; laughed with them, jested with them, and flirted with them all in turn. Though very few women of quality were remarkable for propriety of conduct, the daughter of General Howe behaved so strangely that it drew upon her the well-intentioned reproof of an elderly Duchess, who was high in the confidence of the Princess.

"My dear child," she observed, on hearing her mention something extremely improper. "I assure you, you could not have done a worse thing."

"Nay, I protest to your Grace," replied she very readily, "I could do a great many worse things."

The Princess, in her mild and amiable manner was also induced to make some observations; to which the giddy girl paid just as little respect.

Anthony Lowther was still in full pursuit. He saw he had many competitors for the prize; but he proceeded with that skill which long experience had taught him. He managed to be as frequently by her side as possible, and breathed

to her ear those insidious flatteries he knew to be most effective with such dispositions. She laughed and jested with him as well as with the rest; but he fancied there was a difference in her manner towards him. Her eyes seemed to shrink from his glances; and the tones of her voice occasionally betrayed a tenderness which he regarded as a sure sign his skilful approaches had had the desired effect. He had only to improve his opportunities, and the prize was won.

As for Fanny Meadows, no alteration had taken place in her. Many gay courtiers, attracted by her beauty, became civil to her; but they were soon repelled by her prudery from making further advances. It had become a regular jest with the Court wits, who had enjoyed her society the longest, to prevail on every stranger on his entering their circle, to pay particular attention to Fanny Meadows, for the purpose of witnessing his mortification at the manner in which his advances were sure to be received.

The Princess was extremely partial to her Maids of Honour, and was always particularly kind to Mary Lepel:—this had greatly increased her escape from Baron Bothmar, for her Royal Highness seemed sensible that she had

been the cause of the critical position in which her young friend had been placed. When not absorbed by her metaphysical disquisitions, or religious arguments, their considerate mistress appeared never so well pleased as when encouraging some scheme for the amusement of her ladies in attendance.

It happened, that among the innumerable tastes which the Princess possessed, or thought she possessed, a taste for poetry was not the least powerful, and in its development she chose to display some very curious fancies. On one occasion she commanded that a day should be devoted to rural enjoyments in "the true Arcadian simplicity," and insisted that all her ladies should assume the costume of shepherdesses, while a select circle of gentlemen should represent shepherds. A fine lawn on a declivity, in a retired part of the palace-gardens, possessing several appropriate statues, and a fountain, was the place selected for the performance. There was to be a little rivalry in music and poetry, after the old classic models, and her Royal Highness had endeavoured to secure a favourable day.

As far as the weather was concerned it proved as delightful a day as ever belonged to an English

r. Some tall trees flung a pleasant shadow
grass, as if for a retreat when the sun
too powerful. A sort of rustic bower or
was made for the accommodation of the
s, where she took her seat about noon,
in a costume sufficiently pastoral for a
hepherdess. In short, she would have
an admirable frontispiece to Sir Philip
s Arcadia.

er side was the indefatigable gossip, the
of Devonshire, availing himself of every
e of her Royal Highness to any absent
to acquaint her with the secret history of
er grandmother, or still more remote an-

He wore a pea-green spencer with sky
eeches and stockings, with his wig tied
bons of the same colour.

ie other side of her Royal Highness was
me Hervey. The Princess had insisted
s attendance; indeed it was remarked that
er allowed of any amusement, in which
ionable beau was not included. Whether
ought that his presence would confer
on her entertainments, or whether his
inement amused her, we cannot now stop
mine; but it is certain Handsome Hervey

was always present by command at every little fête in which her Royal Highness chose to indulge. It might have been noticed as strange that he never took an active part in these entertainments. His proverbial taciturnity, and avoidance of even the slightest trouble was never more conspicuous than on such occasions. He generally stood in near attendance upon his royal mistress, looking languidly on whatever amusement was going forward, and drawing out some remark, ludicrous from its excess of effotation—and then only by way of reply.

On the present occasion, he was dressed if possible with more elegance than was usual with him. His pastoral suit being of the most graceful shape and handsome material; and could he have been divested of that excessive foppishness and effeminacy, that made him so marked a character, he might have passed for an Apollo. No one knew but himself and his tailor the immense pains that had been taken to render him the most irresistible of Strephons; indeed from the shape of his locks to the colour of his stockings every portion of his apparel had undergone the most elaborate preparation.

There was a slope in the lawn, on the velvet

turf of which reclined the Maids of Honour in graceful attitudes, each with crook in hand and rosy at her breast, in rustic boddices and petticoats, her hair prettily dressed with ribbons ; and forming together a group of the most charming Phloes and Delias ever imagined.

Near them, either reclining on the turf or leaning against the trees, were the forms of the Duke of Wharton, Philip Dormer, Anthony Lower, Colonel Argyle, and the other select gentlemen, who were thought worthy of appearing as shepherds for that day. They were very gaily dressed after the most becoming patterns to be found in Sèvres china, with the exception of the colonel, who chose to wear the plaid and dress of

Scottish shepherd ; and if he looked less becoming than his more shewy associates, it could not be doubted he looked a great deal more natural. Truth however compels us to add, that he appeared to disadvantage in the eyes of that fashionable rustic community, particularly after handsome Hervey drawlingly asked if he had left his bagpipes, where he had left his breeches.

To make the picture as rural as possible, a few sheep were to be seen at a little distance nibbling the grass, and occasionally looking askance at the

masquerade going on so near them. It certainly made a very pretty tableau—nor could it well have been otherwise, seeing how many beautiful women and handsome men formed its principal objects. Nevertheless the scene bore about as much resemblance to pastoral life as could be expected from a courtly representation of it.

The shepherds and shepherdesses were conversing together in a kind of rustic phraseology they thought most in accordance with their new apparel. The Princess was remarking the admirable effect of the scene before her. "It was truly Arcadian; it was a thousand pities she had not got Watteau to paint it. She could not have imagined the thing could have been done so well. She was much obliged to every body for having taken such pains to please her. She thought Madam Lepel's dress particularly becoming."

"An excellent dress indeed, your Royal Highness," exclaimed the Duke of Devonshire, "it appears as if copied from the portrait of my Lady Dorothy, second cousin to my Lord Scrub, who chose to be drawn by Lely as a shepherdess holding an orange. Lady Dorothy married the Lord Barnaby Bullrush. He had the reputation of being a mighty strange person, and a vast deal of

ery was attached to his name on account of affair of gallantry he was stated to have had a lady of condition, whom her friends used very scurvily. Lady Dorothy, your Highness, was vastly pretty, and reports busy with her name in connection with a nobleman of high rank who had acquired great celebrity for his devotion to the fair sex. Married late in life, and had a son ; and it was looked as a singular coincidence that the boy should have terrible red hair, and my Lord's cousin who was a frequent visitor, had hair of that peculiar colour."

"Don't you think, my Lord, Mary Lepel looks as well as a shepherdess ?" asked the Princess turning suddenly round to the arbiter of fashion. "Vastly well indeed !" drawled Handsome Her-

Her Royal Highness gazed intently at the duke and then as intently at her Maid of Honour ; perhaps she expected the gentleman to have expressed his opinion more at length ; but Handsome Duke was an economist of his words. Possibly thought as the old woman said of her owl, for suffering a similar deficiency of speech, "he thinks more." Certain it is, it seemed that he regarded the proceedings of the Court favourite with more interest than he could readily find words to express.

Finding nothing was to be gained from the Exquisite, the Princess quietly resigned herself to the gossip of the Duke of Devonshire.

At a little distance stood another group composed of Mrs. Howard, the Duchess of Bolton, and Lady Wortley Montagu, engaged in observing the Maids of Honour.

"Maybe it isn't vexed I am," observed the Duchess, "at seeing that harem scarem creature, Sophy Howe, going so ainsly into the trap that's set before her very eyes by that double distilled desaver Nanty Lowther. See how the sarpent eyes of him are fixed upon her; and she flutters about as giddily as though she had no more notion of danger than a post."

"Well, it's all her own fault," exclaimed Lady Wortley Montagu impatiently.

"She certainly has become prodigious careless," said Mrs. Howard; "but I don't think there's any harm in her."

"No more harm, my dear, than there is in a goose that the thafe of a fox is about to spring upon. It's a thousand pities though, so it is, the poor child's eyes are not opened to that wheedling fellow. She can't know what victims have already suffered by listening to his beguiling tongue—the villain of the world as he is."

“She wouldn’t thank any one for telling her,” said Lady Mary. “But ’tis her affair, not mine. I dare say after all she knows well enough what she is about.”

“Adam Howe is not ill disposed,” said Mrs. Gard. “Her good spirits run away with her.” “By the powers! now, I’m thinking it’s bad luck as will run away with her at last,” observed the Duchess, in her broadest Irish, and with a look in which both her companions readily joined. “Look at the Colonel, dear,” added she, “it’s no wonder he is to say something civil to poor Fanny Howells, without observing how monstrous she looks at finding his knees uncovered in Scotch fashion he’s in. Oh, bother, now! ’t is no modest she is, at all, at all! I’ll go bail she’ll faint if she was sure it wouldn’t be thought strange in the presence of so many gentlemen.” “Oh, she’s quite insufferable!” cried Lady Mary. “In my opinion there’s nothing so detestable as a prude.”

“Oh, then, faith!” replied the Duchess, with a look of mischief in her fine eyes, “it’s easy enough enough to be on that score; for divil a reproach of that sort was ever made against you or is like to be made against you.”

"No," said Mrs. Howard, good humouredly joining in the laugh, "Lady Mary and I ought to have no fears of being pointed at as prudae. I suppose the character did not suit our dispositions."

"I don't know what it suited," replied Lady Mary. "But I know I never had a fancy that way. I always liked a pretty fellow; and never was ashamed to own it."

"Oh, you're honesty itself, my darling," exclaimed her Grace, with a laugh. "But may be all this time you wasn't content with liking but *one* pretty fellow."

"Why, you see," said Lady Mary, "they're a kind of dish that are mightily like larks—you require a prodigious number to make anything of a show."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" cried the Duchess. "Well, you've done your best anyhow to have as good a show of 'em as your neighbours. But what's Madam Bellenden doing with all those elegant shrugs and grimaces? Is it wanting to pass for a French Shepherdess she is?"

"She's only practising her Parisian accomplishments," said Mrs. Howard. "She thinks, I suppose, she may forget them if they are not employed; and I verily believe were she left to the

unionship of the poultry-yard, she would call into service for the purpose of captivating the feeblest of the cocks and ganders, rather dispense with them entirely."

"Only look now at our dear Molly Lepel!" said the Duchess of Bolton. "There is the wild worthless Duke of Wharton on one side of and the elegant and ceremonious Philip Dormer on the other. Faith, she looks like a lamb between a tiger and a fox."

"At least she appears quite reconciled to such rough company," said Lady Mary, in a tone resembling a sneer.

"Let us, they're going to sing," exclaimed Howard; and sure enough, on a command from the Princess, a music book was produced. The Duke of Wharton, Colonel Argyle, Mary Anne, and Mary Bellenden sang out of it the following words; Philip Dormer accompanying on the flute:

QUEEN OF THE MAY.

Wreaths of pale roses, meed worthy a bride,
 Every fair blossom that bends to the blast;
 Violets bring from the banks where they hide,
 The sun-loving cowslips pluck freely and fast.

For the Best—for the Fairest, a garland we weave,
She shall reign o'er our sports, and our homage receive,
'Tis the season of Spring, when young hearts should be gay,
And we form a rich crown for our Queen of the May.

Come join in the dance as we scatter fresh flow'rs,
And loyal as joyous, cry "Hail to our Queen!"
May her life be one season of these happy hours,
And her heart as the sun-shine that gladdens this scene.
Then away with all sorrow, we'll dream not of care
While the sun is so bright, and the world is so fair;
'Tis the season of Spring—we should dance and be gay,
As we sing in sweet chorus, "Hail, Queen of the May!"

The Princess thanked the singers for the compliment they had paid her, naming each by a pastoral designation it had been agreed beforehand they were to wear with their Arcadian dresses. Then a dance was called for; and the Brigadier's daughter and Handsome Hervey were commanded to tread a measure. To make things as characteristic as possible, Philip Dormer had provided himself with a pipe and tabor, and a pretty rustic dance was now danced to that very rustic accompaniment.

The bean was quite as great a bean as a shepherd as he was as a Gentleman of the Bed-chamber; in the elegance of his appearance and in the

ment of his manners he looked worthy of chosen as the umpire of the pretensions of three rival goddesses. But his air of high and easy self-possession as he attended his beautiful partner, did not pass unobserved. She thought over her long list of heroes, and endeavoured to find one with whom she could compare him; but she was soon obliged to acknowledge it was a fruitless search. Not one man so greatly indebted to the dancing mask. Not one had possessed an appearance so noble. As to her favourite Prince Oroonoko any comparison was out of the question.

Maid of Honour addressed her partner three times, but found she could elicit from him only a few but civil replies expressed in the fewest words and drawled out in a way that made it awkward and fatiguing to speak. At the conclusion of the dance he led her before the Princess, who praised his performance, and made an expressive allusion to the pair being extremely well matched. The man elevated his eyebrows a little, but did not display his powers of endurance by any utterance of sentiments. The lady laughed as gaily as inclination and happiness would allow, and denied the compliment very archly, stating that she was much

inclined to think her partner belonged to the dumb part of creation, so little use did he make of his gift of speech.

"Ah, Delia!" exclaimed the Princess, "is not that a proof, think you, of an impression made upon our esteemed Strephon too deep to be expressed by ordinary language?"

"To be sure it is, honey!" exclaimed the Duchess of Bolton. "It's extraordinary language he'll be after using when he begins to find out what's the matter with him. I'll go bail he'll want a hundred tongues to express the half of it."

"Oh dear me!" cried the beau in his peculiar tone, "one tongue would more than suffice were that tongue your Grace's."

"Oh the villain! what a reflection," cried the Duchess joining in the general laugh, as Handsome Hervey making her a low bow, handed his fair partner to her seat where, however, much to her surprise, he chose to linger. While another couple were dancing, she entered into a lively discussion on her favourite subject, and shewed such extensive reading in fashionable romances, as astonished her companion. She launched out into the praises of the different heroes, recounting their great

ds with a most delightful enthusiasm ; and finally declaring that she could never be satisfied with a lover unless he rivalled the achievements of that incomparable Prince whose name was so frequently on her lips.

The Duke of Wharton endeavoured to ridicule her heroic predilections, referring to the heroes of romance as so many crack-brained fools ; but it would have been better for him if he had left the subject alone. The fair enthusiast addressed herself to the beau, and described to him some of the numerous incidents with which her memory was stored, exemplifying the most devoted and interested attachment on the part of such illustrious characters. Handsome Hervey appeared to give his whole attention to every word he said, though his comments were, as was customary with him, particularly scanty.

Each shepherd danced a measure with his shepherdess, and the pipe and tabor player was in pretty active employment providing music for them. At last Colonel Argyle good naturedly offered to relieve him, and Philip Dormer had the satisfaction of leading out Mrs. Howard, she being the only shepherdess who had not enjoyed her portion of the day's entertainments. He had

little reason to regret having delayed this enjoyment, for he quickly found he had obtained an admirable partner. Mrs. Howard was a truly fascinating woman, and having put forth all her powers to please, was rewarded with the most perfect success.

The dancing being over, another Arcadian entertainment was commenced. The Princess had heard of the contests of rural swains in singing the praises of their mistresses, and wished to have something as like them as possible. It had therefore been determined that each shepherd should recite a poem of his own in honour of his particular mistress; and when the Princess commanded the appearance of the rival poets, they took their places opposite to her, and every one in turn repeated some high flown verses respecting some real or imaginary object of his affections.

The affair was exceedingly well managed. The competitors had no doubt an understanding amongst themselves previously, and most of them being in possession of considerable poetic talent, their verses afforded the most lively satisfaction amongst their fair auditors, each of whom found herself alluded to under her appropriate rustic

appellation. This trial of skill gave rise to the expression of many happy fancies, and Delia, Daphne, Clora and Lavinia, our young Maids of Honour, became the objects of some of the most graceful flatteries that could delight a pretty Roman.

The Princess had to pronounce judgment on the claims of the competitors. As all had acquitted themselves extremely well it required a keen discrimination to name the most successful. Her Royal Highness, however, did not lose much time in coming to a decision. She determined that the shepherd Strephon had most distinguished himself in the contest, and in token of her decision in his favour placed a wreath of myrtle round his head.

Handsome Hervey, to every one's surprise, had taken his place amongst the contending poets. No one suspected he would have fatigued himself by writing or learning a couplet. The queen, however, astonished them by repeating several well turned complimentary verses, which must have given him no slight trouble to compose. They were in praise of some mistress designated by the fanciful title of Mellabia, but who it was, the very cleverest at guessing had not

the most remote conception, as he had never been seen to pay particular attention to any woman.

While the victor was being rallied at the success he had achieved in immortalising an unknown mistress, the attention of Mary Lepel was called by her royal mistress to the fact that she had allowed her sheep to stray out of sight. She was commanded to take up her crook and bring them back. The Maid of Honour hastily rose from the spot where she had been reclining between Mrs. Howard and the Duchess of Bolton, and tripped lightly after her strayed flock. The Duke of Wharton, Philip Dormer, and Colonel Argyle, simultaneously made a movement to assist her in her search; but she playfully forbade their stirring, assuring them that she intended showing every one how well she could perform her duties as a shepherdess—a character she appeared to like almost as well as that of a heroine. She went laughingly away, evidently as full of happiness as of beauty, and her melodious voice could be heard singing the burthen of a pastoral ballad for some time after she had disappeared from her admiring companions.

After leaving the lawn, Mary Lepel found her-

self in a path winding through various plots and little clumps of shrubs. She went tripping on till she came to an open gate. Satisfied that the sheep had taken advantage of its being unfastened, the fair young shepherdess did not hesitate a moment about following in the same direction. She was now in what appeared to be a shady lane, along which she proceeded in the same buoyant spirit in which she had set out upon her march, amusing herself by conjecturing whether any of her fair favourites had ever been sent by the Princess to bring back strayed sheep, and then imagining the adventures they met with.

She was surprised at last that she could see no trace of her flock ; and having gone a considerable distance, was considering the propriety of turning back, when she heard voices close to her, and immediately afterwards a whistle was given. Several men then leaped from the hedge ; at the same moment that a chariot drove rapidly up, two men dressed like countrymen, in smock frocks, seized her arms, whilst another in the garb of a farmer appeared to be giving them directions.

"Come, Madam," cried one of them in accents marked by the slightest rusticity, "may I never do an ill turn if I'm not cut to the heart to

be obliged to do anything to so fair a lady that may appear ungentleel ! curse me if I s'tat—but time's precious, and we can't waste it in ceremony. I must beg therefore you will allow me the honour of conducting you to the chariot, assuring you that no harm can befall you ; on the contrary, that it will be greatly to your interest to go with us quietly."

" Insolent fellow ! how dare you have the audacity—"

" Oh, if that's the go, may I never do an ill-turn but with your leave, my pretty dove, we must e'en cage you our own way. Come Bill, lend a hand."

Mary Lepel screamed as the two men attempted to lift her. In a moment afterwards, several others jumped from another part of the hedge. They, however, it seemed, did not belong to the same party ; for, on their appearance, the countryman and his associates who had first seized the Brigadier's daughter, lifted up their smock frocks, and each man drew his sword, proving they had very little to do with the rustic occupations their garb denoted. A second chariot approached with the new comers. These also carried the arms of gentlemen under their outward garment, for, on no-

ing the hostile proceedings of the other party, armed themselves in a similar manner.

Come, Captain!" cried out the leader of the second party as he came up, "you must give up the lady. We are the stronger party, and are determined to have her."

No, Jack, may I never do an ill turn if I throw away a hundred pounds quite so easily," replied the leader of the other band, "curse me if I

Well then, boys, there is nothing for it but to fight for her," exclaimed Jack, turning to his men. "I've sworn to take her; so my Cock-Bottle Captain, look to yourself, for I'll make you die like a gentleman, though you never could be like one."

The men who had hold of Mary Lepel were obliged to release her to defend themselves from the sharp onset of their assailants. Bewildered and terrified by the clashing of the steel and the oaths of the men who surrounded her, the Maids of Honour stood for some minutes irresolute. Mary would have ran away, but she found herself in the centre of half a dozen fierce conflicts, and the glancing weapons threatened danger on every side.

Presently she found herself seized upon by one of the fellows who last arrived. He snatched her up in his arms, and was bearing her with hasty strides towards the second chariot, his companions closing in between him and his pursuers in such a manner as to prevent their molesting him. The Brigadier's daughter screamed lustily, and struggled as much as she was able, but could make only a very trifling resistance in the powerful grasp that enfolded her light limbs.

She was borne to the chariot—the door was hastily thrown open, she was rapidly placed inside, and in another moment this daring attempt at abduction would have been successful. The screams however of the young lady had been incessant, and loud enough to excite the attention of several persons who happened to be in the neighbourhood. A crowd rushed to the spot, several soldiers on duty at the palace amongst the number.

“I'll be hanged if that isn't our young Madam!” shouted an elderly man in the Lepel livery, as he hastily approached the scene of action with a long staff in his hand. In the next moment the fellow who had placed Mary Lepel in the chariot was stretched on the ground; a general attack was

on the combatants, who were glad to beat a retreat; and John Coachman was made y for life by his young mistress leaping into rms as the chariot drove off at a furious

CHAPTER III.

POLLY ON THE THAMES.

To lead a life of drink and feast
To oppress the poor, and cheat the priest,
Or triumph in a virgin lost,
Is all the manhood thou canst boast.

SMART.

TOWARDS the afternoon of the day following that of the occurrence described in the last chapter, several persons had assembled in what appeared to be a public coffee-room. The room which was large, though low for its size, had boxes all round, where small parties could be accommodated with the infusion of the aromatic berry, then so popular, and a perusal of the newspaper; and round the little tables they contained several little groups had already assembled. Sometimes

any individual spelt over his paper by him—sometimes two persons were engaged in essential communication, for the coffee-house favourite place of meeting, not only for recreation but for business; and sometimes the news would be read by a little circle of eager listeners, who listened only to make their comment on the state of affairs, the fall in South Sea and the scandal of the hour.

Though the place was undoubtedly a coffee-house, it bore evidence of being one differing in features from such as were then in existence in other parts of the town. The low ceiling, the windows all round, the continual change in the colour of the floor, were features not to be found in any place of entertainment of the same kind either in London or Westminster. Then, the windows were open, instead of hearing the London cries, the rattle of the carriages, or the steady tread of footmen, or any of the various noises which were always to be found within earshot, the noises that were most audible resembled the beating of waves against a ship; and the more to strengthen this idea, every now and then there came out of “Boat ahoy!” “Oars!” and many others familiar to all such persons as were in any

way acquainted with the navigation of the Thames.

On going to the window this impression was confirmed by noticing the broad surface of the river, with its numerous boats and barges passing and repassing, with the wharves on each side; from that place of observation the stranger might see occasionally a boat shoot towards the spot where he stood, and such passengers as she carried, shortly afterwards were observed to enter the coffee-room. The external view might occasion some doubts to enter the mind of the stranger as to the exact character of the place in which he found himself; but a glance around him at the eager politicians, the busy gossips, the active waiters, and the fragrant beverage, of which fresh supplies continually made their appearance, must soon have satisfied him, notwithstanding the extraordinary locality, that the place was a genuine coffee-house.

It was well known as "The Folly," a floating coffee-house on the Thames, in some respects similar to the floating baths in our days, so long a familiar feature near the bridges. "The Folly" was much patronized by men of fashion, and of course by men of no fashion. To get into a wherry, and be rowed to this favourite resort, to

the usual penny at the bar, look over the news, take a *dish* of coffee, and hear the gossip, social, literary and fashionable, that was sure to be circulated there, formed a part of the daily life of a man of quality.

"The Folly" also was a favourite place for assemblies both for business and pleasure. Although the coffee-house had many frequenters, in those snug boxes people could be as quiet as they pleased; and, what was equally important, quite out of the way of interruption from those whose visits they most feared.

Although many persons were engaged in reading newspapers, there was a continual hum of voices going on in the coffee-room, which effectually to screen the communications and render them confidential. This appeared to be taken advantage of by two persons in a distant corner of the room, who had been leaning over their table, and carrying on an animated conversation that had lasted some time. One of these had a green shade over his eyes, and was wrapped up in a heavy coachman's coat; the other was in a shabby genteel dress of the period, a sort of compromise between the gentleman and the footpad. His features were plain

enough to be seen, and readily enough to be recognized. They bore the impudent swaggering look of the fellow so well known to the town as Captain Spatterdash, or Jemmy Highflyer, among his familiars—the Cock and Bottle captain already introduced to the reader at the meeting of the Hell Fire Club, and at the attempted abduction of the Brigadier's daughter: the young lady just named appeared to be the subject of conversation between these worthies.

“ Hang me, if I could have suspected that jade Fortune would have played me so slippery a trick !” he exclaimed. “ There never was a better plot laid ; and we had watched day after day for an opportunity to put it into execution. May I never do an ill turn, if I wasn't on the very point of succeeding, when I was stopped, as the d—l would have it by that cheating shark, Jack Wild-air. Who'd have thought of his being there ? Curse me, if I did ! May I never do an ill turn if I didn't believe he was safe and sound in his old lodgings at the sponging-house.”

“ It was a most vexatious business,” observed the other in a low voice.

“ Vexatious,” uttered the Captain. “ May I never do an ill turn if it wasn't the most cursed

atment I ever heard of. To lose a hundred guineas when they were just within my grasp, was enough to aggravate a thousand misadventures; however, it was well I managed to get away; for if I hadn't beat my retreat at that moment, I should have been close enough within the net by this time."

"Are you quite sure he is employed by the Duke of Somerset in this affair?" demanded Captain Spatterton.

"I got it all out of one of the bungling rascals who attended me that blessed morning. May I never turn back, if I don't pay Jack off all old debts of these days. Couldn't have supposed I should have sought to take the bread out of the mouth of such an old friend as I am. But I know the Duke was most determined to succeed; and a recent failure has served only to aggravate his determination to make more strenuous exertions. He'll give heaven and earth to get possession of the Duke's money. Jack Wildair is just the very fellow for the purpose. May I never do an ill turn, but I shall be a day after the fair, unless we take decisive measures, and set about them at once."

"I will stimulate you the more, Captain Spatter-

dash. I here offer fifty pounds above what I had previously mentioned, if you succeed in placing this young lady in my possession."

"Bullfrog told me the Duke had offered a clear two hundred!" said the Captain, drily. "And since I've seen what a bang-up angel she is, may I never do an ill turn if I don't think she's worth that to anybody."

"We won't quarrel about terms, Captain. Get me Madam Lepel, and I'll amply recompense you."

"Say no more. You shall have her, depend on't. If that fellow crosses my path, I'll so cut and carve him, he shall only be fit for the sausage-makers; may I never do an ill turn if I don't. But I think we'd better go to work at once; so let's be off out of this."

The two persons immediately rose, and made their way out of the coffee-room; but not without exciting observation from some of the company. There was a group near the door who had been engaged in an animated discussion, and were obliged to make way for the Captain and his companion. The former strutted along very consequentially, and with an easy impudence recognized several persons who were however quite

known to every one else in the room as
 self, comprising as they did some of the
 celebrated writers of the day.

Mr. Dean, your humble servant!" ex-
 the Captain as he passed along. "Sir
 Inbrugh, your most obedient. Mr. Pope,
 I see you well. Sir Richard Steele, I kiss
 hand. Mr. De Foe, may I never do an ill
 I am not monstrously delighted at behold-
 again." And thus he went through the
 party. They, however, returned his friendly
 ones very coldly; and Dean Swift replied
 to the Captain how he left his friends in
 a— a question that worthy officer appeared
 have heard, nor the general titter that follow-
 he went on bowing and addressing every
 he reached the door. His companion, on
 contrary, seemed desirous of avoiding notice,
 quietly passed through the group without
 a word.

at scoundrel's after no good!" exclaimed
 on; "and from his civility one might be
 sure he entertains some design on our
 only I happen to be more sure, by a great
 is much too shrewd a rogue to be en-
 in any affair so little likely to turn out to
 advantage."

A laugh recompensed the Dean for his jert.

"Does any one know the person who was in his company?" inquired Pope. "If anything could be judged of a fellow by his associates, I will venture to say he may be accounted a rogue on indisputable evidence."

"I may be mistaken," said Sir John Vanbrugh; "but the walk resembled very closely that of the Duke of Buckingham."

"Oh then there's no great penetration required in guessing the employment of our civil friend," observed Sir Richard Steele.

"There's some intrigue in hand, I'll wager a guinea," said Sir John.

"Was'nt Spatterdash one of the parties engaged in the attempted abduction at Hampton Court?" asked Pope.

"So I heard his name mentioned," replied De Foe. "He is an experienced hand at poaching for petticoats, and likely to be extremely useful to any one who might require his services in that way."

"And Buckingham is just the employer for such a scoundrel," added Pope. "I should not wonder at all if my fair friend Molly Lepel is the game they have in view. I saw her yesterday

Sir Godfrey Kneller's, where she was sitting before her portrait; and as I glanced at her I could not help envying the knight his agreeable study of her features."

"Yes, the man is certainly to be envied who possesses such a woman's *countenance*," said Dean Swift; "and so I suppose thinks the Duke, who wishes no doubt to purchase it as the surest mode of possession."

"She may countenance the painter as every pretty woman does her mirror—for the agreeable image it produces," said De Foe; "but his Grace if he find himself in a very different position should seek to make himself master of her attractions."

"At least, she shall be warned," observed Pope; "the days of Charles II. are passed, thank God."

"Ah! we have much to thank God for!" cried the Dean. "If the merry monarch had much profligacy he also possessed some taste: the change appears to be to greater profligacy, and no taste."

Other subjects were soon started both political and literary, and the coffee-room of "the Folly" resounded with the smart sayings and brilliant

remarks of the gay throng, much to the amusement of some and the annoyance of others. Some were too busy spelling over the contents of their papers not to feel annoyed at the amusement going on around them; and they took care to betray their feelings by sundry audible pishes, pshaws, and frowning glances, they thought proper to direct towards the merry group.

Amongst the discontented, the most conspicuous was a young citizen, a recently appointed ensign in the Train Bands, who, considering himself a great man, seemed desirous of showing all the insolence and independence which he chose to imagine it was the great man's privilege to exhibit. At first he satisfied himself with a mere "pahaw!" or "piah!" like others; but finding no notice taken of these evidences of his dissatisfaction, he expressed a few more emphatic expletives. Now Ensign Snap had long strove in his own circle to be regarded as a lion whose path it was extremely dangerous to cross, and the young cits of his acquaintance, some of whom had accompanied him to "the Folly," looked upon him as one whom it was by no means advisable to offend. A growl from the lion in the Train Bands was always a sufficient hint for the more peaceably

l. Somewhat to their surprise, his com-
found these intimations now produce no
on any one of the party it was expected
ld intimidate ; except that one who bore
arance of a clergyman, did once glance
the spot where Ensign Snap was dis-
is indignation, and asked loud enough to
by all in the coffee-room, "if anybody's
had been taken ill."

at this period, when the wrath of the
was about to boil over, a man in a shabby
a coat and dirty boots entered the room
ved, and was stopped by a 'torrent of
d fierce expressions that issued from the
the Train Bands, who looked ready to
the whole company, so fierce was his

not take an insult from any man, d—
claimed the Ensign. "His cloth protects
oy G— I'd pull his nose."

arty continued their laughing and jesting
themselves without taking the slightest
Ensign Snap, which greatly aggravated

He seemed very desirous of fastening a
upon some one ; but was rather at a loss
f the group to commence with. Every

now and then as he gave utterance to something particularly threatening he would half draw his sword, and dash it down in the scabbard again with great force.

"I'll wager a guinea these fellows could be made to laugh on the other side of their mouths now," said the Ensign, looking as big as he could; "every fool could make as great a noise and fancy himself as d—d pleasant. I shouldn't wonder at all but that they are all a parcel of poor devils practising to earn a sixpence at a grinning match. As for Master Parson, I suppose he's lately had a crown given him, and has come to London to spend it."

"Was that the one who called you a monkey, Captain?" mischievously inquired one of his associates.

"Monkey!" cried the Ensign half drawing his sword, "I should like to hear any man, not a rascally parson, use such a word to me. I'd let daylight into him, d— me." Here the little officer of the Train Bands dashed his weapon into the scabbard with a clang that resounded throughout the room.

"Monkey!" shouted the man in the dirty boots as he stalked up to him; and folding his

, brought his face as near as possible to that of the furious Ensign.

"Perdition seize me! what d'ye mean, fellow?" cried Ensign Snap, taking a pace back, and looking at the thin figure and cadaverous features of the stranger—which by the way, did not prove a very formidable opponent.

"Monkey!" shouted dirty boots again, taking another step forward, that brought him upon the Ensign's toes.

"Thunder and devils! You impudent vagabond, how dare you behave in this way?" cried the officer shaking with passion, as he once more stepped back.

"Monkey!" shouted the stranger, as he brought his face so close to that of the little Ensign that their noses touched.

Ensign Snap was almost in a state of convulsion. The company appeared to enjoy the scene immensely; and even some of his associates, over whom he had so often domineered, began to exchange significant glances. The thin man still stood over him with folded arms, staring at him with a mingled expression of disdain and contempt. Ensign Snap felt that his character as a man was likely to leave him, if he did not imme-

diately punish his insulter; nay, he doubted whether his reputation in the Train Bands would not be gone for ever if he put up with such insolence: nevertheless, there was something in the glance of the thin man which made him feel extremely uncomfortable.

“Waiter!” he exclaimed at last; “how came this pickpocket here?”

Ensign Snap speedily found he had asked a most imprudent question. In a moment the stranger had unfolded his arms; in a moment the Ensign was lifted off the ground, and to his own horror, the surprise of some, and the alarm of others, in another moment he found himself thrown through the open window by which he had stood, smashing part of it in his exit, and cast into the Thames, into which he presently was heard to fall with a tremendous splash.

A rush was made to the windows by the company, as the horrified waiters, landlady, and all the establishment, crowded into the coffee-room. The gentleman in the shabby campaign coat and dirty boots very coolly sat himself down, and took up a newspaper, as he began to hum an opera tune. He did not give so much as a glance towards the window to learn the fate of the

unfortunate Ensign ; nor did he look at the group of terrified people who stood before him, as much amazed at his coolness, as they were horrified by the deed.

The landlady was the first to speak.

“Here’s a pretty kettle of fish !” said she ; and then thinking her own loss the first thing to be considered, added fiercely, “I hopes you’ll pay for them broken winders.”

“Make out your bill, my good woman,” said the thin man, very quietly. “To so many broken panes of glass ; so much. I’ll pay it.”

“That’s acting like a gemman, howsomever !” said the woman much mollified. “But what’s to be done in regard of the poor gentleman what’s rownded ?”

“Make out your bill, my good woman,” added the man in the same quiet tone, and without in the slightest degree altering the unconcerned expression of his countenance. “To one Ensign of Chain Bands sent to the bottom of the Thames ; so much. I’ll pay it.”

This was too much for the risible muscles of his questioner.

“Well, you *are* a rum customer, I must say,” exclaimed the landlady of ‘The Folly.’ “And may I make so free as to ax your name ?”

"S'death, my good woman, don't you know *me*?—I'm Lord Peterborough."

"It's all right," cried a customer from one of the windows. "A waterman has just dragged him into his boat. He's only got a good ducking."

"Sarved him right too!" loudly exclaimed the landlady, repeating a profound curtsy to her noble customer. The eccentric Earl was now recognised by many of his friends; and they enjoyed a hearty laugh together at the summary punishment they had seen inflicted on the turbulent Ensign, as the citizens mischievously hurried off to offer him their consolations and assistance—which he seemed to relish as little as his bath.

CHAPTER IV.

A DAY WITH THE KING'S BUCKHOUNDS.

The horn sonorous calls, the pack awaked,
 Their matins chant, nor brook thy long delay.
 My courser hears their voice ; see there with ears
 And tail erect, neighing, he paws the ground ;
 Fierce rapture kindles in his reddening eyes,
 And boils in ev'ry vein.

SOMERVILLE.

THERE was a fine bracing air, for it was the
 be of autumn. The brown leaves had fallen
 in the trees, and were either whirling in eddies,
 driving in clouds over the open spaces. Of the
 se masses of foliage that had given shelter to
 h countless varieties of birds, and had af-
 led shade from the fierce sun to many a
 ry traveller, nothing remained but a few

shrivelled leaves still clinging to the boughs, bearing scarce any resemblance to the fresh verdure which had so lately distinguished them.

The sky was clear: one vast expanse of blue spread out over the wide horizon, and the sun was visible, though his rays were scarcely felt. Instead of the subduing heat which had been often hardly endurable, the sunshine was one that afforded far more light than warmth. The grass was slightly touched with hoar frost of the preceding night: evidence of which, however, was fast disappearing, as the sunbeams came forth with increased power.

In short it was a delightful healthy morning, particularly for out-of-door amusements. And so it had appeared to a multitude of people, for they had crowded together in a convenient place near Hampton Court for the purpose of getting a good view of the cavalcade from the palace, as the Court rode out to hunt. For it should be known to the reader that the Prince of Wales had exhibited a striking partiality for the sports of the field, and as the hunting season had just commenced, he insisted on the gentlemen of his suite and the principal ladies in attendance on his consort, joining him in full hunting costume, and enjoying the pleasures of the chase.

The people of England greatly approved of his taste in the son of their sovereign, and he had risen very much in their estimation in consequence of his apparent fondness for one of their national sports. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood took care to see as much of the hunt as was possible; and if they did not succeed in viewing the whole of the chase, they never failed in gaining a sight of the Prince and his brilliant company, whom they were sure to welcome with every demonstration of good will.

On the occasion to which we have just referred, there was a considerable crowd of rural labourers, servants, small shopkeepers, and a few persons of a more respectable grade, waiting the appearance of the Prince and his suite. To amuse themselves during the period they had to wait, there was the customary expenditure of money, with such tricks, as are most in request at such an assembly.

Among the company who appeared most distinguished was our old acquaintance John Coachman, who had taken up a position that afforded him a commanding view of the road by which the Royal Hunt were expected; and he had come to make his remarks on the horsemanship of people

of quality ; but more particularly to notice the equestrian appearance of his young mistress, in whose fame as a rider he felt more than ordinary interest. He was expatiating to a stranger, in the dress of a citizen, who seemed to take unusual pleasure in the old man's discourse.

John had been mentioning his never-to-be-forgotten experience in the Great Duke's stables, and had, on sufficient encouragement, proceeded to relate what he knew of the King's mistress ;— his round, good-humoured face glowing under his wig and cocked hat, in a way that showed the indignation he felt at having experienced such a degradation as, he not unjustly considered, existed in her service.

It was not unnatural for so communicative a person to allude to his present place ; and having got on such ground, to speak of "young Madam Lepel," seemed a matter of course. The stranger evidently took no common interest in his humble acquaintance, and asked many questions respecting the habits of the family, and the disposition of the Brigadier's daughter ; all of which John Coachman answered without the slightest hesitation.

"Bless your heart !" he exclaimed "I was the

st as ever set her on a oss. In short, I put her to training as soon as she come from boardin' hool; and though at first she was uncommon ittish, and shied at everything, I managed, by sing monstrous pains with her, to break her in reg'lar as possible; so that at last she went the ce in grand style, and might be warranted to keep with any hounds as ever run."

"May I never do an ill turn but Madam Lepel ist have been a most accomplished horse-man," replied the stranger, who, it is scarcely ecessary to add, was Captain Spatterdash; but looked so like a respectable citizen in his sober t, his own mother would not have known him.

had not fixed himself upon the honest coach-m without an object, and there could be no abt it was connected with his odious employ-nt.

A loud huzza prepared them for the approach of cavalcade; and now the Prince was seen, not his usual plain coat, but in a hunting suit, with ugle at his side, and a heavy whip in one hand. took off his hat to the applause of the people, bowed, if not gracefully, at least kindly; but awkwardness was far less apparent on horse- than on foot. He seemed pleased with

his reception, and under the influence of his gratification, the homeliness of his features was not so conspicuous as was apparent in a drawing room.

He was followed by a brilliant train in which the Master of the King's buckhounds, and various officers connected with the Royal Hunting establishment, as well as equerries, grooms, lords and gentlemen, and other attendants on the Prince, were in full hunting costume of that period, on horses of various degrees of merit, but bearing but a remote resemblance to the splendid animals now brought together at a Royal Hunt.

The persons of many of these noblemen and gentlemen were known, and they were loudly cheered as they passed; but the crowd seemed most pleased by the appearance made by two or three lady equestrians, who rode near the Prince. These were the Maids of Honour who had been persuaded by their royal mistress to accompany her Consort in what would, at this day, be styled the first meet of the season.

"That's her!" exclaimed John Coachman, apparently in an ecstasy of gratification, pointing to one of the ladies. "Bless your heart, I could swear to her among a thousand. There's a seat!

re's a bridle hand ! there's a figure for a side
dle ! I've seen a little in my time, but amongst
all, nothing as could come up to our young
dam in her horsemanship !”

The enthusiastic charioteer directed the atten-
tion of his companion to a beautiful young amazon
in riding habit of blue camlet, embroidered with
silver, wearing her well-powdered hair in curls
that hung to her shoulder, though tied up by a
silk ribbon, above which rose a beaver of the
finest cock, edged with silver, and ornamented
with a feather. She certainly sat her horse with
great deal of easy grace, and the reins were
guided by a delicate fringed glove, in a manner
that shewed the lady was quite qualified to manage
her somewhat mettlesome steed.

“So that is young Madam Lepel, is it ?” in-
quired Captain Spatterdash, with more admiration
than he could find language to express. “May I
ever do an ill turn, if I don't take her to be as
pretty a bit of flesh as I ever clapt eyes on. Hark
you honest friend !” exclaimed the Captain, con-
fidingly to his new acquaintance, “this same
young mistress of thine is truly a most ravishing
creature. She is likely to take all hearts by storm.
Indeed I have heard of a nobleman who is despe-

rately enamoured of her at this present moment, and would not mind making the fortune of any worthy fellow who would put him in the right way of obtaining her."

"Bless your heart, that's nothing to what I know!" cried John Coachman, with a knowing wink, "there's a good many more osses than that in the stable, I can tell you."

At this moment the Captain recognised some one in the crowd, and suddenly pushed forward in that direction. He had scarcely turned his back, when a man, whose general attire was that of a country clergyman, took up his position. With a grave and thoughtful air he presently asked John Coachman if he knew whom he had been conversing with; and on being answered in the negative, begged to caution him upon too hastily forming new acquaintances, particularly warning him to beware of the person who had just left his side, who was no other than the notorious Captain Spatterdash, and who, there existed good reasons for believing, was employed by a certain dissolute nobleman to decoy a young lady named Lepel into his custody.

Nothing could exceed the indignation felt by honest John on hearing this communication, ex-

to his gratitude to the reverend gentleman who so timely warned him ; as he shook his fist in direction the Captain had taken, he was profuse in his acknowledgments to the worthy clergyman who had so kindly interfered to protect his young mistress. As the two walked on to see theunds thrown off, a confidential conversation commenced, in which John Coachman took care to inform his clerical acquaintance of all he knew respecting his master's daughter. The stranger, who was no other than Jack Wildair, found no difficulty in eliciting from the unsuspecting domestic all the intelligence he required respecting the fair Maid of Honour's habits and employments ; he learned where she walked, at what hour she was abroad, who she visited, where she slept, and who were her favourite friends and dependants. In short, he acquired all the information he needed, and he took a friendly leave of his new acquaintance, that he might lose no time in availing himself of the means his active mind had devised for assisting his employer in his nefarious schemes. In the mean time the Brigadier's daughter rode by the side of her friend Mary Bellenden, the rest of that gay throng who followed their prince. She was mounted on a hunter, appa-

rently of great speed and power, who seemed extremely desirous of bursting away from the light hold of his rider, and dashing over huntsmen, hounds, Prince, courtiers, and all. He, however, satisfied himself with prancing, neighing, rearing, and playing a few other antics, not uncommon with high spirited horses, when displaying symptoms of having a will of their own.

The delicate hand of the rider gently patted his arched neck, and he heard the sweet tones of her voice commending his beauty. He was not insensible to such fascinations ; for though he did not cease his eccentric evolutions, they became less violent than they had at first been.

On her right rode the Duke of Wharton, on a beautiful grey, nearly sixteen hands high. He was, as usual, extremely attentive to the young Maid of Honour, and evinced, in every look and word, how completely his heart was devoted to her. Notwithstanding the impassioned tendency of his gaze, a smile rested upon his soft voluptuous countenance, that seemed to express a sense of triumph, as if the bright prize for which he had contended was now securely his own.

At a little distance rode Philip Dormer, who occasionally exchanged a word or two with the

Brigadier's daughter, notwithstanding the attempt made by the Duke to monopolize her attention. He felt he was but second in the race, but he was satisfied it was not yet half run, and that at the proper moment there could be no difficulty in the way of his putting on all his speed, passing his confident competitor, and winning. Consequently he was in full spirits, graceful as ever in his compliments, and apparently on the most friendly terms with himself and his rivals.

Mary Bellenden was full of vivacity, and coquetting with her admirers with all the effect her charms could gain from her equestrian habit. Colonel Argyle made one of the group; but his indifference seemed so perfect that it was scarcely possible to imagine he had ever been attached to the lady.

Sophy Howe was riding by the side of Anthony Lowther; no longer loud and laughing. Her eyes were cast down, her countenance flushed, and there was a deep seriousness in her attention to the whispered communication of her dangerous companion.

The Prince frequently turned round to address one or other of the ladies, and occasionally pointed out some place in the delightful landscape

before him, that excited his admiration. He was in excellent spirits, and did not fail to honour his fair companions with his usual profuse expenditure of compliments.

In this manner, the cavalcade proceeded till they entered upon an extensive track of grazing land, where on an eminence that commanded a splendid view of the surrounding country, they caught a glimpse of the hounds with their usual attendants, and a numerous field of horsemen composed principally of the neighbouring gentry, who as soon as the Prince was recognised took off their hats and welcomed him with three hearty cheers. His Royal Highness looked well pleased at this compliment, and bowed repeatedly as he advanced towards them.

The huntsmen and whippers in were actively employed in keeping back the fine pack of stag hounds that now enlivened the scene with their graceful forms and musical throats, and many of the riders had considerable difficulty in restraining the impatience of their high mettled steeds, who seemed extremely anxious to make a start. The animal rode by Mary Lepel, particularly, shewed unmistakeable signs of an inclination to break away; and when held in, he pawed up the turf,

and turned now on one side and now on the other, in a manner that attracted general attention to himself and to his lovely rider.

"Is your horse in lofe, Molly Lepel, that he play such dricks vid you?" inquired the Prince, good humouredly.

"It is by no means unnatural for your Royal Highness to suppose so," observed Philip Dormer, "every one who approaches Madam Lepel cannot help being placed in such a predicament."

"Ah, mein Gott!" exclaimed his Royal Highness, laughing with great earnestness, "it shall be a grand humiliation for der boor horse; for like der beobles I know, he cannot vail to make an ass of himself."

The Prince's jest was received as Prince's jests variably are, and although the Duke of Wharton and Philip Dormer felt satisfied they were the objects of it, they laughed quite as loudly as the rest; and this as good courtiers they were bound to do.

"Down, Jowler! back, Towzer! steady, Ponto! away, Hero!" came frequently from the royal attendants, as they sought to remind a careless lord of his duty.

The Brigadier's daughter felt inexpressibly delighted at the animated scene before her; it served to create a pleasing excitement, that made her feel as though about undertaking some great adventure.

"A penny for your thoughts, child!" suddenly cried Mary Bellenden, as they were riding together, noticing her young friend's pleased yet excited look. "*Ma foi*, if the Prince had accused yourself instead of your horse of being in love, I don't think he would have been very far from the truth. I'll wager now a pair of fringed gloves you are considering the rival claims of the Duke and Philip Dormer. Is it not so, *ma mignonne*?"

"No, Mary, I am not thinking of any thing of the kind, believe me."

"*Est-il possible, ma chère*, then what in the name of wonder can you be so intent on?"

"I was thinking whether Cyrus ever took Roxana to enjoy so moving a scene as this?"

"*Parbleu!* you are ever thinking of those abominable romances; you are as bad as you were when at Minerva House. But *voilà!* they have found a stag. Away he goes! there, you can just see him bounding over that low hedge. Now

in the turnip field. Oh, *mon Dieu!* this thing is prodigiously exhilarating."

"Ware hounds, ware hounds!" shouted the huntsmen, as the noble pack were getting off on scent, and the attendants rode round to keep the crowd of horsemen pressing forward.

"Now, mine good friends!" exclaimed the Prince, "is your all ruined body and preeches, you should be so impatient to go to der?"

A loud laugh, in which the Prince joined as heartily as any, shewed how readily the company appreciated his Royal Highness' pleasantry.

"Oh, this is charming, this is beautiful indeed!" cried Mary Lepel, with much enthusiasm, as she stood on the excited scene before her; but the patience and spirit of her steed almost immediately served to take up all her attention, for as he heard the cry of the hounds, the exclamations of the huntsmen, and became aware of the throng of horses pressing on around him, he began to pull at the rein and paw with his fore legs with increased violence. The fair equestrian soothed him both with hand and voice, but he let her know very intelligibly, he was not to be left behind.

"I hope der ladies is not afraid of noting," cried the Prince, "though so mosh inglined to preak our hearts, I no wish they shall preak dere own necks."

"Your Royal Highness need be under no apprehension," said the Duke of Wharton, after the laugh had subsided, "ladies' necks are not easily dislocated, or they would be unworthy of the heads they carry; and no one ever heard of such an accident happening to a Maid of Honour."

"Very goot; I did not tink of dat," replied the Prince, "but it has happen to some vemales, who have der misfortune to preak dere necks at Tyburn," and the Prince's laugh was heard above that of his obsequious courtiers.

His Royal Highness and his friends forgot when such an accident happened even to Maids of Honour and to more than one, in the time and under the auspices of one of his ancestors. On Henry VIII, the Pope conferred the title of "Defender of the Faith;" but His Majesty could have laid a much better claim, in consequence of his having been instrumental in bringing about these "accidents" in the persons of his own wives, to the Chinese distinction of *first chop*.

"We must pe off," added the Prince, "der

nds are in vull cry; now, mine goot vriends,
y von for himself, and der teufel catch der
lmost."

way swept the whole body of horsemen down
hill, and away went the Brigadier's daughter
e midst of them. The high spirited animal
rode did not at first seem inclined to go in
most straight direction; for he swerved a little
one side and then on the other, and his arched
c was playfully bent, till his mane almost
ot the ground. He went down the side of
hill at an easy pace, the Duke of Wharton on
side and Philip Dormer on the other; the
r Maids of Honour with their gentlemen
e behind.

t the bottom of the hill the land opened to
onsiderable distance—a low hedge with a dry
a enclosing the next field. Although an open
was visible at a convenient distance, many
e horsemen chose to shew the leaping powers
heir hunters, and the barrier being insignifi-
; they found no difficulty in passing it. The
e rode by Mary Lepel evidently intended to
ow their example, and went over the obstruc-
almost without an effort. The Brigadier's
ghter called to mind the lessons of John

Coachman, and the leap did not in the slightest degree inconvenience her. She was closely followed by her attendant gentlemen; but her fair schoolfellows thought it most advisable to turn aside, and take advantage of the friendly gate. By this division Mary Lepel got rid of all her suite except the Duke and Philip Dormer, who kept near enough to encourage her by their commendations of her riding.

After passing the first mile, the animal she rode increased his pace. The field was beginning to get a little scattered. The hounds being far away in front closely waited on by some of the best mounted officers of the Royal Hunt, between whom and our fair heroine several horsemen might be seen, the Prince amongst them, going over the ground in gallant style, and taking everything before them in the most fearless spirit.

It not, however, unfrequently happened that amongst these adventurous riders a fall would occur; and a riderless horse scouring over the pastures or a gaily apparelled huntsman sticking in a ditch, now became no unusual feature in the landscape. As the chase proceeded the state of the country became more difficult. Stiff fences, high walls, broad ditches, rapid brooks, and double hedges became more and more frequent.

ry Lepel very much enjoyed her ride. She
 her seat well; and of the leaps, though they
 becoming more and more formidable, finding
 put her to little inconvenience, she had be-
 less apprehensive. The pace was now very
 s, and her two companions found some
 lty in keeping near her. They had already
 l a considerable portion of those who had a
 minutes before made it appear that they were
 upon being well up with the hounds; and
 who were in advance of them lessened in
 er every five minutes.

e by one they were passed or disappeared in
 way or other as another mile was gone over.
 Lepel overtook the Prince, who had dis-
 ted, and was opening a five barred gate when
 orse came on at full speed, and to the prodi-
 astonishment of his Royal Highness, the same
 nt he was aware of her approach, he beheld
 ss her hand as her steed made a prodigious
 clearing gate, Prince, horse, and all.

lein Gott!" exclaimed he, as the Duke of
 ton, and Philip Dormer came up. "Our
 Lepel flies drough the air like von old
 on a proomstick."

re was no time for further remark. His

Royal Highness mounted, and with the young Duke and Philip Dormer rode on after the flying equestrian, whom he made every exertion to overtake, but without success. They, however, shortly came in sight of her, going at a tremendous pace over an extensive range of pasture fields divided by "raspers" of the most threatening character, which he beheld her pass with a degree of astonishment he could not find words to express.

They managed to get over them, but not without difficulty ; and these prodigious leaps tried the mettle of their horses, on whom also it was evident the pace was beginning to tell. But in this manner the chase continued for several miles, the Maid of Honour increasing the distance between them at every field. The last they saw of her was "flying," as they called it, over a wide brook, at which, when they arrived, had they not been instigated to make the attempt by beholding the feat achieved by a woman, they would all without hesitation have declined anything so hazardous. Philip Dormer was first at the bank ; but his horse refused the leap. The Prince was a fearless rider ; he went boldly on ; his steed was good, but his strength unequal to

he did not gain a secure footing on the bank, and tumbled back with his rider's scream. The consequences were nothing more dreadful than a good ducking to both; for they managed to make good their landing, and they started off again as though without their bath. The Prince turned his head, for he heard a tremendous splash, and the Duke floundering in the middle of

the equestrian began to feel extremely ex-

She had passed many of the best of the noble animal she rode was galloping wide extent of stubble in a style that showed little the pace had affected him. Then she heard the horn of some hunters giving the usual notice to those who were following of the direction the stag had taken. To see the pack in full cry, though still at a considerable distance, with only about half a dozen hounds before her. A beautiful landscape was marked by spires and farms, clumps of trees, brown lands the labouring plough dividing, and green pastures where cows, sheep were spread about in numbers that showed the wealth of their owner. Beautiful

parks dotted here and there with gigantic trees that appeared to have been undisturbed tenants of the land for centuries, where herds of fallow deer stood quietly cropping the herbage till the cry of the hounds sent them in a resistless mass sweeping over the velvet sward till they were lost to sight in some neighbouring plantation, attracted her passing attention equally with the winding river with its pendant willows or alders, beneath which the angler was trolling for pike or the sportsman creeping in pursuit of wild fowl.

With the excitement created in her mind there came an elevation of sentiment, which taking its tone from her romantic studies, made the young Maid of Honour imagine herself on an equality with the most adventurous of her favourite heroines. She doubted whether even Statira though impelled by her love for Prince Oroondates, would have ventured to leap the terrible places she had that day been carried over by her good steed, and could not help entertaining a doubt that this sport in the days of the "illustrious Bases" was attended with half the dangers found in a hunt with the King's buck hounds in England.

The chase continued to be a most severe one.

Several horses were knocked up. The more prudent riders had turned off, contenting themselves with what they had seen. The tired animals could not take the leaps that presented themselves, though far less formidable than many they had already gone over, and their owners were often obliged to ride along the side of a hedge, craning over to see how they might get through with the last exertion.

Even the hounds began to show symptoms of giving up, which the poor stag had exhibited more conspicuously. He was seen about a couple of fields in advance of the yelping pack; and it might easily be predicted from the manner in which he went over the ground that he must soon give in. The stag, however, was by no means inclined to lessen his efforts to escape from his dangerous pursuers, and a wood at a little distance seemed to point out a ready means of evading them. He made one last effort, and was shortly lost to view among the trees. The pack followed; two or three huntsmen only were within a reasonable distance of them; they wound their horns before they plunged into the forest; but very few were in a condition to profit by the signal.

In a short time afterwards up came the Brigadier's daughter. She heard the cry of the exhausted hounds and the wind of the huntsmen's bugles, and went full speed in that direction. A broad path appeared to lead through the wood, and the elasticity of the turf seemed extremely agreeable to her excellent steed, who bounded over it apparently very little fatigued by the long and severe chase through which he had carried his fair rider so gallantly. She patted his neck, and he answered her caress by neighing and springing over the yielding turf as lightly as though he were Pegasus bearing Apollo to Olympus.

A mutual delight seemed to exist in the noble animal and his graceful rider, and each contrived for some time to give such tokens of satisfaction as the other could readily recognise. In this way they continued for a considerable distance. The path grew narrower, till at last the overhanging boughs could only with difficulty be avoided. Mary Lepel listened for the cry of the hounds or the notes of the horn, but for a long time could not hear either. At one time she fancied she heard such tones, but very faintly, and then began to doubt she had taken the right direction when entering the wood.

the road which she had recently been pursuing out a narrow cart track, but even that track soon lost, and it now appeared to be nothing than a foot-path. This, however, to her great distraction presently was crossed by a broad cart track into which she turned, as she thought in the direction pointed out so indistinctly by the faint sounds of the hunting horn. She now urged her horse to increase his speed, expecting to hear some sound that would assist her to retrace the ground she had lost. But she proceeded nearly half a mile without hearing anything in any way resembling what she wanted.

Her position had become extremely embarrassing. She knew nothing of the direction the hounds had taken, she had not the slightest idea where she was, and the unpleasant impression which had taken itself upon her, that she had lost herself in a labyrinth of the outlets of which she would find it almost impossible to discover from her entire ignorance of the place. She had not met a human being since she had entered it, and unless she could find some guide, she was apprehensive she might wander about till dark in its tortuous and irregular cart tracks.

This was indeed a position for a heroine, per-

plexing though it was. Still she was not alarmed, for she fancied that either a courteous knight, or friendly hermit must shortly make his appearance to direct her out of the labyrinth. But the people who had any business in the wood were of a very different class either to knights or hermits. Mary Lepel, however, had the fullest confidence in her own romantic fancies, and rode on in some little anxiety, it is true, but with a comfortable assurance such aid could not be very distant.

At last the creaking of a cart wheel varied the monotonous silence of the scene, and as she rode in the direction whence it proceeded, the fair equestrian met a sand cart driven by a great red cheeked, red haired young clown in a very soiled smock frock and very heavy ankle boots.

"Have you seen anything of the hounds?" inquired the young lady. The astonishment of the bumpkin at finding himself unexpectedly addressed by so lovely a creature in a costume evidently so strange to him, was beyond all conception. He could not have looked more awe-struck had he seen a ghost suddenly ride before him. The wide mouth opened to its full extent, and the large eyes were fixed in a stare of mingled wonder and alarm.

“Have you seen anything of the hounds, my friend?” she repeated in such melodious accents as had hitherto never met his ear.

“Ounds!” said the boy with a bewildered look, and an earnest scratching of the head.

“Yes, the King’s hounds,” she added.

“Keensounds?” he repeated in a strong country dialect, evidently not aware of the meaning of the question, “he doant live in these parts.”

The poor Maid of Honour was in despair at such stupidity. She, however, made another effort to extract information from her very rustic new acquaintance.

“Pray, my man, what name do you call this place?” she inquired.

“It be called Deadman’s Dingle.”

“Bless me, what a disagreeable name! And how far may it be to the nearest village?”

“Five mile.”

“And which way must I go to reach it?”

“Strait as ye can go through Deadman’s Dingle, till ye come to Squash Hollow, and then turn off to the sand pits, up the Lover’s Walk, and round by the haunted beech, and over the marshes till ye get into Dumble’s Lane; and Dumble’s Lane will take ye out by Farmer Giles’s barn,

then go right on till ye reach Hog's Common, and when ye get to Hog's Common any body will tell ye where Snickerton Snivey be."

"Thank you," she replied, and started off again at a gallop, leaving the boor gaping after her as long as she remained in sight, scratching his head and wondering what strange sort of creature it was he had just been speaking with.

Poor Mary Lepel! Not a quarter of what she had heard could she remember. She tried to recall the words as they had been uttered, but she could get hold of nothing but a confused jumble of Deadman's Dingle, Squash Hollow, Dumble's Lane and Snickerton Snivey, and presently found herself forced to give up the attempt in despair. At first she thought of riding back for clearer directions, but she was perfectly satisfied she should not succeed in obtaining anything intelligible from so very stupid a fellow.

The courteous knight or friendly hermit did not appear to be forthcoming; but she had scarcely gone half a mile before she discovered she was not altogether in solitude, for she was reminded there were other persons in the wood in a manner far from being agreeable.

"Your money or your life!" shouted a great

gaunt fellow, with desperado written in every lineament of his forbidding countenance, as he protruded his ragged person from a neighbouring clump of brushwood, beyond which the curling smoke made it appear as though there might there be a place of concealment for others beside the villain armed with the long horse pistol who thus menacingly made his appearance. The unexpected summons, however, startled the horse quite as much as it did his fair rider, and he went off with such speed that the footpad could only mutter a hearty execration, and return to his companion minus the booty he had thought within his grasp.

On went the unflagging steed at a racing pace, and on went the rider, somewhat alarmed, it is true, by the sudden apparition of so villanous looking a scoundrel; nevertheless, so strong was her ruling passion, that notwithstanding her fear and her anxiety she could not help feeling a secret satisfaction at having experienced so many adventures. The horse in a short time reduced his speed, and Mary Lepel was left to deliberate on the best plan of getting out of the apparently interminable wood. But as she knew as little of one path as of another, it was quite im-

possible she could arrive at any available way of finding the right one. As a last resource she thought of leaving this difficult matter to the guidance of her steed ; and laying the reins on his neck she suffered him to take whatever direction he pleased—a resource she remembered that had never failed when tried under similar circumstances by certain heroic personages of her acquaintance.

In her case, too, it was productive of the best effect. Not only did the sagacious animal conduct her safely out of the dreadful forest, but he proceeded on through several lanes as if perfectly aware of what he was about, till he came to a large park gate. A man standing near respectfully opened it, and the fair adventurer now found herself cantering along through one of the noblest parks she had ever beheld. She passed several domestics who exhibited towards her as much respect as though she were the mistress of the stately mansion that now became visible amongst the venerable trees.

After such a fearful ride, and after wandering about so long in perplexity and alarm, the young Maid of Honour was too glad of the rest and shelter that appeared so near, to disturb the course

of her horse, intruder though she felt she was; and she did not doubt that every attention would be readily rendered to her by the owner of this stately edifice, as soon as she could relate the adventure that had made her an involuntary trespasser on his property.

In this state of mind she still allowed her steed to have his own way, though his way appeared to her exceedingly singular. The horse went straight to the stables, where he stopped. Two or three active persons immediately made their appearance, and assisted the lady to dismount; and what greatly increased her surprise, they did not seem in any way astonished at her arrival.

“They must imagine I am an invited guest,” thought she, as she sprung out of the saddle. Her surprise rose to wonder when she heard one of the grooms address the horse as an old acquaintance.

She had scarcely got her feet to the ground, when an elderly man in a rich livery presented himself before her, and in the name of his master, in the most courteous terms, invited her to honour his dwelling by entering it. The Maid of Honour soon found herself crossing a spacious

hall, through a double line of bowing domestics. Her heart felt unspeakably grateful for the prospect of rest and comfort which the many evidences of luxury and elegance that made themselves visible around her directly she entered this splendid mansion, held out to her.

Poor girl! Not very long after her arrival she had reason to wish herself back in the darkest recesses of the wood from which she had escaped, even with the risk of coming in contact with the formidable robber, whose demand on her purse had so alarmed her. There were few places less safe for her than the one to which she had, though she was quite unaware of it, designedly been conducted. The sagacious steed knew well the way to his own stables: and his bearing so fair a rider on that eventful day, formed part of a well laid scheme, laid by his owner to gain possession of her person.

CHAPTER V.

THE THREE GRACES.

Want all the advantage prosperous vice attains,
 Is but what virtue flies from and disdains ;
 And grant the bad what happiness they would,
 Is what they must want, which is, to pass for good.

POPE.

THREE persons were enjoying themselves as
 merrily as it was possible for any three per-
 sons to find enjoyment in the good things of this
 world. They had recently concluded a sumptuous
 banquet, and the array of wine-bottles,
 decanters, and glasses of the costliest
 description, with china plates, fruit, sweetmeats,
 silver-mounted knives, and other evi-
 dence of a dessert, such as was usually brought
 to the tables of people of distinction, shewed that

the little party were not indisposed to gratify their palates with such luxuries as it was the fashion to associate with wine in after-dinner indulgences.

They were all free livers, and might have been styled epicures. Their pleasures were extremely animal. Eating was one of the principal enjoyments of their existence; and from the manner in which they applied themselves to the task of emptying the contents of the various wine-bottles down their throats, it was quite clear enough that drinking was another source of gratification that had few rivals in their affections.

It was no ordinary liquid that they were imbibing with so much relish; for wealth had made them fastidious. Their tastes were refined; they delighted in what was most choice. They were connoisseurs in rare wines, and critics in curious liqueurs. But it was the fashion at this period to regard quantity equally with quality; and excess was so much a matter of course in the symposia of men of quality, that a gentleman of any spirit would much rather get drunk upon small beer than keep sober upon Tokay.

All the little party who sat at this well supplied table, the reader has met with under circum-

stances much less luxurious. They were three of the leading members of the Hell Fire Club ; but there existed in the appearance of the three *con-vives* none of that ruffianism which was so marked a characteristic when wearing the vulgar disguises they assumed amongst their fellow Mohocks. They now appeared in all the pomp of noblemen of the highest distinction ; their costume boasted of velvet and embroidery, court-swords and ruffles, diamond rings, and gold buckles, and wigs of the most fashionable character.

In the youthful host will easily be recognised the profligate Duke of Wharton. The bold, free glance which characterized his scarcely-developed features was made more expressive by a smile of triumph, as he continued to drink his claret, and encourage the loquacity of his two noble guests.

There could scarcely have been a greater contrast than presented itself between them and himself. In them it was not difficult, despite the friendly aid of art, to distinguish the well-marked lineaments of the faded and worn-out libertine. The artificial colour might give a more youthful bloom to the cheek ; but it could not hide the lines that an ill-spent life had marked so legibly. Nor could all the cosmetics in the world restore

to the sunken, crow-footed eye, the fire which once had lighted up its glance.

The apartment was well lighted ; but the wax, while it displayed the gorgeous paintings on the walls, rich with the glowing colours of Titian, Albano, and Carracci, also enabled the observer to note the ravages which Time and excess had made in the countenances of those old men. The reader need scarcely be told that these were those twins of folly and profligacy, the Dukes of Buckingham and Somerset.

The dark complexion and haughty cast of features of his Grace of Somerset now expressed the most intense self-complacency ; his toothless gums were in constant motion, as the wine unloosed his thoughts, and gave the necessary excitement to his enfeebled frame. His form was spare, and his hand shook with a sort of palsy, as he freely helped himself to the generous liquors so liberally provided for his entertainment.

Exactly opposite glowed the red face of his Grace of Buckingham :—a complexion his frequent potations had much more to do with, than health. His face was more solid than that of his associate ; but the flesh was flabby, the cheeks seeming almost as pendulous and as ruddy as the comb of

old game cock. All were richly dressed in prevailing mode, and though the extended oration, and gouty legs of the Duke of Buckam were not more lover-like than his countenance, his wig and dress were quite as youthful as those of his youthful host.

The old men were getting extremely communicative, and were evidently bent upon impressing their youthful friend, the great success they had amongst the ladies of their acquaintance:—each outboasting the other in the most extravagant manner, and scarcely waiting the conclusion of the anecdote to which he was related to listen to commence one intended to exceed it in presumption and mendacity.

The Duke of Wharton did not attempt to interrupt either of his guests. He seemed infinitely amused at the preposterous folly of assertions of this nature by two such antiquated dignitaries; and the sense of his own personal advantages may have given to his countenance an air of extreme satisfaction which it so consciously expressed. His friends placed great reliance on their vast experience, and referred to it in a manner as though they thought little of their host's capabilities in the same field of enter-

prise. He laughed more than once; but it was much less at the wit his rivals displayed, than at the ideas that entered his own mind of the astonishment he was preparing for them.

"Apropos of fair women," said the Duke of Buckingham, eagerly interrupting his companion, "in my youthful days, when I was at Breda with the King, at the time the rascally Round-heads had driven his sacred Majesty and his best friends out of England, I got acquainted with a lady of the fairest complexion I ever saw. She was a Dutchwoman."

"A dairy maid, eh!—Buckingham?" exclaimed the other drily, "whose complexion had taken the tinge of the curd she handled, and who came to you as redolent of butter and milk as the cows under her charge."

"Odd's life!—no! She was the wife of the Commandant. A woman rather on a large scale it is true, for Dutch measurement is vastly excessive; but she was as delicate a piece of well-fed womanhood as could be found in Holland, or elsewhere. Pass the claret to Wharton, he don't drink."

"Thank you, and fill for yourself," said the Duke of Wharton. "Then let us know some-

g about your good fortune with the Commandant of Breda's beautiful wife."

Oh ! I became acquainted with her in a mighty singular sort of manner. It was one of my ear-
adventures. Yet I remember it as well as if
ad taken place but yesterday. I was coming
e to my lodgings after a roaring carouse with
King, and three or four more of us, at a time
n his Majesty hadn't so much as a clean
to his royal back, and all his courtiers to-
er could not have clubbed the value of a new
olet, of which most of us stood greatly in
l ; and the toasts I had drunk to the speedy
ruction of Noll, and all his canting crew had
er impaired the excellence of my vision, for I
e my way to a large house at a different part
he town to where my more humble domicile
to be found. Nevertheless I was monstrous
tive I had found the right house, and knocked
he inmates in the most determined manner."

So the fair Dutchwoman opened it ?"

No, she didn't. It appeared that I had se-
ed the Commandant's mansion for my un-
ly summons, and as his worship had left
e on a visit to the Burgomaster, the people,
red it was the return of their gracious master,

hastened with a light to the door, in opening which the candle was blown out. I stalked in, and as usual in my own place, ascended the stairs, entered the apartment where a rushlight was dimly burning, and as I was, threw myself on the bed.

“‘Oh, my beloved Peterkin!’ exclaimed a soft, and not unmusical voice, as I felt myself enfolded in a pair of stout arms. ‘Oh, my beloved Peterkin! How impatiently has thy fond wife awaited thy return?’

“‘Eh—what?—Zounds!—Who the devil’s here?’ I cried not exactly comprehending what kind of intruder I had met with. A scream that might have startled the dead at the bottom of the Zuyder Zee brought a tribe of half-dressed male and female servants, each with a flaming candle. I stared, and the good lady stared; and the servants stared more than both of us put together.

“‘Who is this lady in bed with me?’ I coolly inquired.

“‘His Excellency the Commandant’s wife, Mynheer.’

“‘S’death! Where then am I?’ said I, observing the strange things around me.

“‘In his Excellency the Commandant’s bed-room, Mynheer,’ answered one.

I then, quite thunderstruck, explained the mistake into which I had fallen, and made the most respectful apologies to the lady whose slumbers I had so rudely disturbed. The good lady took the matter much more passively than I had anticipated.

Commandant's wife had screamed, and seemed to feel she had done her duty. She was so complaisant as to regret the little disturbance I had so inadvertently made, and received my parting acknowledgments as I quitted her chamber with her domestics with the same civility with which she would have replied to the order of her lord. I did not fail to remark to myself, that her skin was the fairest I had ever seen. I renewed my acquaintance with her under unusually favourable circumstances, that confirmed my first impression."

The Duke emptied his glass, and refilled it; his friends made some pertinent remarks on the surprising apathy of the amiable *frau*.

"That's a curious introduction, certainly," said

Duke of Somerset, after finishing another aperçu. "But I remember an instance in which I was similarly situated. It was about the time of the Cornmouth's foolish rebellion. I was on a visit to my relation in the North—"

"A distant relation, I should imagine, from his being so far off," said the Duke of Wharton, laughingly.

"He was a second cousin of my mother's," replied his Grace, joining in the laugh. "He was called Lord Bubblejock:—a stiff, wiry, old fellow to look at, as sharp as a Toledo, and almost as thin; and he had taken it in his head to marry a strapping wench, who some people said was a daughter of one of his tenants, whom he had first met minding her father's sheep. My bed-chamber adjoined that of my respected kinsman and his spouse, both of whom were vastly civil to me. Well, the second morning of my stay, I was awoke by a mighty unfriendly dig in my ribs, while a clear Scottish voice bellowed in my ear, 'Donald!—Donald! It's time to be ganging. Get up, man, and call the lassies!'

"I half rose from my recumbent position, and after I had rubbed my eyes well, to satisfy myself I was not in a dream, the first object that met my astonished gaze was a large Blowsabella sort of face, most unbecomingly swaddled up in a huge flannel night-cap. By all the gods, it was my Lady Bubblejock! How long she had been there, or how she got there, I never knew.

ed by my exclamation of surprise, she started with no less astonishment than I evinced.

Hech, Sirs !' she exclaimed with most amply-mplicity, 'what's your wull?' and then, as if for the first time aware she was not in her own house with a terrified look and a manner monotonously diverting, she added : 'Hoot awa! I'm afraid, I've made a wee mistake.' She darted like a hare disturbed from her form, and was gone from the room in a second."

"Ah!" said the laughing host, passing the waters to his guests, "accidents will happen in the best regulated families ; and there can be no doubt my Lady Bubblejock was not the only one of her dear sex who had demonstrated in a similar manner to a man of such irresistible attractions as our friend Somerset, how much she valued his society."

"It is scarcely fair to tell such things," said his Grace, pretending a vast deal of reserve ; " but I may very safely say, few men have been so fortunate as myself."

"Yes, in our days, a pretty fellow was sure to be well cared for by the women," said his Grace of Buckingham, "and as we tried all we

could to please them, we seldom had to complain of their disinclination to please us."

"Happy fellows!" exclaimed the Duke of Wharton, "fortunate dogs! Why was I born so much later?"

"Ah, the golden age for us was the reign of Charles II," observed the Duke of Buckingham; "it was an oligarchy of beauty! It was the paradise of mistresses! It was the Saturnalia of Love! What a loss it is your not having known, Wharton, the matchless creatures who adorned the Court at that period."

"One of them, at least, I have the honour of ranking amongst my acquaintances," said the Duke of Wharton, in a half derisive, half sarcastic tone.

"Zounds, Wharton, you're dreaming!" exclaimed his Grace of Somerset.

"No, indeed, I'm perfectly awake," replied the young Duke, "never more so; curse me! One of these matchless beauties exists in that intolerable old hag, the Duchess of Cleveland, whom I think the devil has either forgotten, or is not too eager to appropriate."

"She may be abominably the worse for wear,"

served the Duke of Buckingham; "but a devil-nice creature she was at one time, as any man would care for. She rivalled in seductiveness the Duchess of Portsmouth—a Cleopatra worthy of an Anthony, as his Majesty of blessed memory. Ah, many a time have I enjoyed a rapturous hour or two in her society, when the King was detained by his ministers, or engaged in his amusements. Poor Rowley had no suspicion of a rival."

"Yet I should doubt you were the only one," said his host.

"You might as well talk of an ant being the only one in an ant-hill," replied the Duke of Somerset; "the Duchess of Portsmouth made her lover appear the queen-ant of an innumerable colony—and pretty productive to her they were."

"I can't say the Duchess was exactly a Lucretia," observed his Grace of Buckingham; "her conduct might have been indifferent enough; but the person was far otherwise. Frenchwomen are verbally fascinating, but Madame la Duchesse seemed to have studied the science of fascination to its highest point. She was the sort of woman to whom a man was sure to lose his heart,

but was pretty certain to send his senses after it."

"Did you lose one or both?" inquired the Duke of Wharton, drily.

"Oh, I couldn't help being prodigiously enamoured, she shewed me so many marks of her favour," answered his Grace of Buckingham; "in fact, she acknowledged I was the only man at Court, who could ever have gained her affections."

His Grace of Somerset cast a look upward of great significance.

"I hope you didn't take advantage of the extreme simplicity of the King's mistress?" inquired their young host very gravely.

This speech was too much for the risible muscles of the other elderly boaster, who although he drained his glass to conceal his mirth, could not avoid giving audible evidence of some part of it.

"But Nell Gwynne cured me of my passion for the Duchess," said the Duke of Buckingham, "Ah, Nelly was a rare creature; 'sdeath! such eyes! such a mouth! so tempting a figure! so seductive a countenance!—I soon threw myself in her way."

"And she told you to get out of it, and he hanged to you, I suppose," observed his Grace of Wharton laughingly, as he rose to ring for a fresh supply of wine.

"No, I doubt Nelly was so civil as to *tell* him to get out of her way," added his Grace of Somerset, as a smile of derision made itself visible on his saturnine physiognomy, "she would have *sent* him out of it, with mighty little ceremony."

"She might have done so with some," said the Duke of Buckingham, "I won't say she might not have done so with my friend Somerset; but I had been an acquaintance of Nelly's of a very long date. Many a time had I bought oranges of her for the purpose of more closely observing her blooming features."

"Ah!" said the young Duke facetiously, "then even at that early stage your acquaintance was not without bringing forth fruit."

It was not easy to say which of the guests laughed most; for one laughed as though availing himself of an opportunity for getting rid of no slight amount of derision he felt for his rival; and the other to prove how readily he could appreciate his host's jest.

"Yes, it was so," replied he: "the acquaint-

ance was renewed when, from a humble orange girl, Nelly had become the favourite of her sovereign ; and I had no cause ever after to consider my sixpences ill laid out."

"Zounds ! that is as much as to say you had held the King's favourite monstrous cheap," observed the Duke of Wharton. "But come, here is a fresh bottle. Wine and women are admirable subjects to discuss together ; and wine, like this, I think you will find worthy of such association."

"'Tis indeed superlative !" said one.

"A glorious vintage certainly !" added the other.

Both the old gallants held their glasses to the light, and contrived to sip till they required replenishing. The conversation now took a turn in the direction of favourite wines ; and the two seniors were as communicative on the subject of their experiences in the service of Bacchus, as they had been in that of Venus. Each outboasted the other in relating various drunken bouts in which he had been engaged in various parts of the world. They had drank Schiedam with the Hollander, Tokay with the Austrian, Champagne with the Frenchman, and Sherry with the Spaniard ;

they had got roaring drunk upon punch, blind drunk upon usquebaugh, muddled with beer, and fuddled with cider. They had enjoyed every degree and species of intoxication. They had taken leave of their senses in every possible kind of company.

The Duke of Wharton had already gained an unenviable notoriety by his excesses; but he was ready to confess that his offences, heavy as they undoubtedly were, were light in comparison with those so fluently described by his venerable guests. It appeared as though they had qualified themselves for the highest degree in blackguardism, whilst he had been content to study for "a little go." But if he was astonished by the startling revelations he heard, he did not think proper to give his surprise an expression. Indeed, he listened with the same kind of smile with which he would have regarded a couple of apes mowing and chattering at each other in the same cage.

Their young host at last led them back to talk of their exploits in love making; and he did this as though he had an object in view. Perhaps as the wine of which they had drunk so copiously was now exercising its influence upon them, he desired to see to what extremity of conceit and

folly they could be made to go. They readily harked back to their former theme, beginning as usual to draw unfavourable comparisons between the handsome women of their younger days and the beauties of the present.

“Apropos of beauties,” said the young Duke, “what has become of the fair Wortley Montagu? Since her return from the East she has appeared so deucedly hipped, every one fancied she was sighing to return to the Grand Signor.”

“Oh she’s gone abroad again,” replied his Grace of Buckingham. “She found that she could not maintain a successful rivalry with younger and fresher beauties; and so as she could not endure to see the charms neglected that for several years made it appear as though she had been sent on earth to insure the happiness of all mankind, she quitted the scene, and has gone to live abroad.”

“Egad, poor Lady Mary is like an author that has outlived his reputation,” said his Grace of Somerset, “or a ribbon out of fashion. But she has had a long reign; and if report speak true, has been extremely kind to many persons who were so fortunate as to attract her attention—the Grand Signor among the number.”

‘No, that has been contradicted,’ exclaimed Duke of Wharton with a laugh. “It is said she was obliged to give him up:—she found such a Turk.”

‘Pope has been terribly scurrilous about her,’ served the Duke of Buckingham when he had silently enjoyed his friend’s jest; “and to do Ladyship justice, she has libelled him most ominably.”

‘Why a short time since hang me if such a pair of turtle doves were to be met with!’ said his host.

‘Oh a metamorphosis not in Ovid has transformed the doves into hawks,’ cried the Duke of Somerset; “and we now are allowed to see the accuracy of the old proverb, ‘Hawks do not pick hawks e’en.’”

‘Well I have no reason to complain of her,’ said his Grace of Buckingham with a smile of peculiar meaning. “She knew how to make herself agreeable, I must acknowledge; but she missed nothing of the fascination so remarkable in the women of some thirty years ago. Ah those creatures! they were quite of another race. Hands, they were divine!”

His Grace tossed off his wine with an air half of

enthusiasm, half of despair, that the time to which he alluded should have passed for ever.

"Yes," said the Duke of Somerset, with something of commiseration in his manner. "We can congratulate ourselves that we lived at a period when woman was to be met with in that degree of physical perfection whence she could only recede. The women of the present day are altogether inferior. Egad, they do not seem to be of the same species."

"'Sdeath, that is a melancholy piece of information!" exclaimed the young Duke, striving to retain his mirth, and plying his already half-intoxicated guests with more wine. "I am quite in despair—positively desperate with having so poor a prospect before me. Nevertheless, there are some women of the present day, who I think might reconcile me to this terrible falling off in female attraction. There is a certain young Maid of Honour—"

"Molly Lepel!" cried both his seniors in an instant; and their fishy eyes all at once assumed an unusual brightness; and their features became full of animation.

"Ah!" said his Grace of Somerset rapturously, "she is a glorious exception."

"Zounds," added his Grace of Buckingham with the same warmth, "Molly Lepel is worthy of the last century."

"Egad, the very mention of her name is an inspiration," exclaimed one.

"'Sdeath! her beauty would ravish an ancho-rite," cried the other.

"On my honour I would risk anything. I would dare anything, I would suffer anything—to secure her smiles," murmured the first.

"D—n it, man, I would sacrifice half my fortune to possess her," added the other.

The Duke of Wharton heard the rhodomontades of these antiquated lovers with the same expressive smiles he had listened to their boastings; but he allowed them to go on uninterrupted—their foolery was amusing.

"By the way, talking of that dear creature," said he at last as if a sudden thought had struck him, "do you remember the wager we made at the club some time ago about her?"

"Remember it!" cried his Grace of Buckingham, with an air of extreme confidence, "of course I do."

"Yes," said his Grace of Somerset, looking equally content, "I have never forgotten it, or its lovely object."

“Her health in bumpers!” exclaimed the other, filling his glass as well as his unsteady hand would allow. “May she soon bless one who has so long been the most ardent of her adorers.”

“Molly Lepel!” cried his rival, pouring the wine, in his blindness, outside the rim of his glass, and then taking it up empty. “Oh, that exquisite face—would that these eyes could feast on its unrivalled loveliness!”

“That wish is not very difficult to realise,” observed their host, stifling a laugh that rose on beholding the stare of stupid surprise his guest exhibited on finding no wine in his glass. “I merely alluded to the subject because I intended claiming my wager. Madam Lepel is now under my protection.”

“’Sdeath! Madam Lepel *here*?” shouted both, jumping from their seats with an expression of the most intense amazement and incredulity.

“Madam Lepel here! The young, the modest, the graceful Molly Lepel in *this* house!” continued the Duke of Buckingham. “Ten thousand devils! ’tis incredible!”

“Zounds, ’tis impossible!” said the Duke of Somerset.

“I don’t believe a word on’t,” added the other.

Well, seeing's believing, gentlemen!" obeyed the young Duke, quietly rising from the table and ringing a small hand-bell, which was immediately answered by a footman. "Be so good as to tell Madam Lepel," said he, addressing the servant, "that the Duke of Wharton desires the honour of her company."

As the servant retired, the two seniors looked at each other, the very pictures of dismay and apprehension.

By — it's all a trick!" cried the Duke of Buckingham, as he thought of the last communication he had received from his active agent, Captain Spatterdash, who held out hopes to him that the young Maid of Honour would be placed in his possession within a week.

No, no, it *can't* be!" exclaimed the Duke of Somerset in the same confident manner, as he recalled the assurance of his skilful agent, Jack Fairdair, that the beauteous Lepel should be his in less than eight and forty hours.

The folding doors of the dining room opened. A lady, elegantly dressed, walked into the apartment. Fuddled as the senses of the old gallants were with their frequent potations, one glance was enough. No one could mistake the matchless form

and countenance before them. They stood as if transfixed to the spot as their young host fell back in his seat, and burst into a loud and scornful laugh. It was the Maid of Honour.

CHAPTER VI.

JUPITER AND DANAE AT LEICESTER HOUSE.

Why do you follow still that wandering fire
That has misled your weary steps, and leaves you
Benighted in a wilderness of woe;
That false Lothario.

WILLIAM LILLO.

Two persons stood in the recess of one of the closets belonging to an ante-room in Leicester House, their figures nearly concealed by the heavy draperies; and they were conversing in a low voice scarcely above a whisper—pretty conclusive evidence that their communication was confiden-

Now, my adored Sophy," said the soft seductive voice of Anthony Lowther, "it's devilish shocking positively, but it cannot be helped. That crabbed old father of yours says I shan't have

you, and chose to put on a mighty independent way of telling one so. You know my devotion, my sweet love ! it is for you to say whether I am to be the very happiest of men, or the miserablest wretch on earth. I don't know though, if the worst come to the worst, how I can break off all at once that sweet communion of soul which has existed between us so long. I vow now you have made yourself so very dear to me, life will be a burthen without you."

"But there can be no occasion for a separation !" exclaimed the trembling voice of the now timid Sophy Howe. "Let us wait for better times. My father will alter ; will think better of you, and more of his daughter."

"Don't imagine such a thing, my adored Sophy. Be assured he is one of the old stiff Buckrams that make it a point to be as obdurate and tyrannical as possible, that they may show their power. It's cursed unlucky. I wouldn't have had it happen for a trifle ; for, after winning such a prize, it's enough to drive one desperate to be obliged to resign it. But, egad, if it can't be helped, one must needs submit with the best grace one can."

"Nay, Anthony, the case may not be so bad as

you think. I will myself see my father and implore his consent !”

“ Such a measure would be worse than useless, my adored Sophy. The old boy is so exasperated on the subject, that he would not be brought to hear reason from any one. I am devilish cut up about it ; but we must learn to bear our misfortunes patiently.”

His fair companion looked at him reproachfully. All that boldness which had once characterised her, had completely vanished. She seemed sensible of her lover’s indifference, and the tears rose unbidden in her eyes. Anthony Lowther gazed on, very little moved, yet fully satisfied the game was in his own hands.

“ And is this to be the end of all your protestations ?” she inquired with a faltering voice. ‘ After all your entreaties, vows, prayers, and promises, you are ready to agree to a separation as if it was the most natural and pleasant proceeding in the world. What am I to think of this ?’

“ Positively, my beloved Sophy, I am in no way to blame. You must be well aware I love you to distraction, and am ready to risk anything to prove how inexpressibly dear you are to me. But here are but two things to be done ; one is to

obtain your father's consent, which I know he will never give ; and the other—the other is—”

“What is the other ?” she inquired faintly.

“To do without it,” was the brief reply. There was a pause of several minutes. The tempter eyed his victim with a shrewd calculating glance, endeavouring to read in her flushed cheek and heaving bosom, the chances he possessed of succeeding in his enterprise.

“Trust to me, my adored Sophy,” he at length murmured ; “and be assured, your happiness shall ever be my unremitting care. I’m deucedly vexed the affair could not be managed in accordance with your wishes ; but I am positive we can arrange it quite as well. I live but for you, my charmer ; let us live for each other.”

What the imprudent Maid of Honour would have said to this temptation cannot be stated, as the lovers were interrupted by a step in the ante-room.

“*Ma foi !*” exclaimed Mary Bellenden, as she approached the window, “I protest I should have taken you for a couple of ghosts, you were so quiet up in this corner. *Pardonnez-moi* if I have intruded on your privacy. I merely came to tell you we have heard some intelligence of

dear Molly Lepel, who so mysteriously disappeared during the last stag-hunt."

"Well, I am mightily glad of that," said Sophy Howe.

"But it is a strange business, *ma chère*," she continued. "I can scarcely believe it. Indeed, it is *très extraordinaire*. I cannot comprehend

She is said to be with the Duke of Wharton, one of his houses in the country."

"Egad, nothing more likely," said Anthony whether, as if he had long anticipated it.

"I am surprised, indeed!" exclaimed Sophy Howe.

"Well, I cannot stay, good people," added Mary Bellenden: "I have much work in hand. Leave you to the enjoyment of your *tête-à-tête*; *adieu*." She then passed out of the apartment, and making her way through the attendants in the next chamber, she proceeded through a handsome suite of rooms; not, however, without entertaining some opinions of her own respecting the intimacy of the two persons with whom she had just parted. In the midst of such reflections she arrived at a door, at which she knocked; but receiving no answer, she opened it. The first object that met her observation was

the figure of a man standing before a picture. It was the portrait of a young and beautiful woman : and the spectator was so absorbed in his observation, that he did not notice the entrance of his visitor. There could be no mistake as to who was the person gazing so intently on the portrait. The plain suit, the ill-dressed wig, the awkward figure would have pointed him out among a thousand. It was the Prince of Wales.

But who could be the lady who had so completely succeeded in fixing the Prince's very eccentric attentions? Mary Bellenden saw at once it was not a face with which she was acquainted ; she had never seen it before, and did not think the original belonged to the Court. Possibly, she fancied, it was the likeness of a lady from whom the Prince had been obliged to part, and whom he had left behind him in Germany.

He continued to stand motionless before it ; and Mary Bellenden distinctly heard a deep drawn sigh. " Ah ! " thought she, " the poor Prince must be more than usually attached. I should never have given him credit for so much sentiment."

"*Bon Dieu !*" exclaimed she aloud, "am I mistaken; or, have I the honour of seeing the Prince of Wales?" His Royal Highness turned quickly round, and his visitor noticed with increased surprise traces of tears upon his homely face. "Poor man," thought the young lady, with slight commiseration, "he feels the separation acutely!"

"Ah, Madam Pellenden!" exclaimed the Prince, striving to put on a cheerful appearance. "What for you come? But I veel mosh bleasure, very mosh bleasure, to see you looking so charming, mine tear shield."

"*Ma foi !* I protest now I was apt to fancy I was intruding," said the lady archly. "*Parbleu !* as long since I have beheld such intense affection, as I could not help seeing, exists between our Royal Highness and the fair original of the beautiful portrait on which you were gazing, when I entered."

The Prince looked in the direction Mary Pellenden pointed, and a shade of melancholy passed over his features. She observed it, and regretted she had made any allusion to the subject, as it was quite certain it was a painful one.

"Ah, mine tear Madam Pellenden," replied the

Prince sadly, "if dat bortrait could speak, it would mosh surprise you, mine tear lofe."

"Nothing more probable," readily answered the lady, "as I cannot but acknowledge I should be vastly surprised at hearing a picture make a speech!"

"But dat is not mine meanings, you bretty rogue," said his Royal Highness. "Come gloser to it; look vell at it, observe vid all your eyes. You see der bortrait of von of der peautifullest vomans in her fader's Court; for she was a Princess."

"A Princess! then, what obstacle—"

"Vell, she vas in lofe vid a Prince, who was ver mosh in lofe vid her; but her fader say, 'No, you shall have your cousin, my bruder's son, who shall inherit both our governments.' So he made her leave her vriends, and a home she loved, to aggompany her husband to der seat of his fader's government. The change vas terrible: but she got used to it, py-and-py, and made her name vamous for being von goot vife, and von admirable mutter."

"*Ma foi!* I do not think I should have proved myself so accommodating."

"No, dat is imbossible. Vell, Madam Pellenden,

goot vife is now neglected and ill-used by her husband, who cares only for some pad vomans ose dupe he is ; and dis boor lady, has only von end near her, a goot gentleman she had known in her childhood. Vell, dese bad vomans beride her husband he visit her for imbrober burres ; and though dere is noting at all to be loved against him, they murder him zecretly, and more, they put her into von glose brison—away from her vriends, her children, her barents, and every poty ; and, O mine Gott ! her children grow up and are made to think ill of their mother, till by chance dey get at der druth."

"Who was this poor lady?" said Mary Beladen ; "I cannot but feel interested in so sad a story."

"Dat poor lady," replied the Prince, solemnly, "dat boor lady is mine mutter."

"Your mother?" she cried in astonishment.

"Yes, mine poor mutter," replied the Prince, and tears again came into his eyes. "I remember it for von long time, I vish to pehold mine mutter. I long to zee her. But I am told I need not drouble myself: but I long to see her very mosh ; and von day ven I vas out hunting, I escaped from my attendants, and runned away in

the direction I knew mine poor mutter was confined. I am please—I am rejoiced, I shall see mine mutter. But just as I get to der place, I am overtaken by der people, and prought back. Now she has been in brison from twenty to dirty years, and I have never peen allow to see her since she left der palace.”

“*Mon Dieu*, what barbarity!” exclaimed Mary Bellenden.

“I am zo many years older,” continued the Prince, evidently much affected; “yet, for all dat, I have still so much lofe for mine poor mutter, I would do anyting to get her out of der vile brison vere she is kept. But mine fader, influenced by der dam antiderluvian grockodiles, who hate her for being so mosh better dan demselves, keeps her close, and vill not let me do anyting in her pehalf; vor if I so mosh as mention her name, he fly into von terrible bassion, and der dam antiderluvian grockodiles do all dey are able to make matters vorse.”

“This is very strange,” said Mary Bellenden. “I should not have thought the King could have behaved with such injustice.”

“Bah!” cried the Prince much excited, “you shall look all over der world and shall not meet

apominable tyrant. Ah mein Gott! he Hanover to dake measures for breventing ape, and he is gome back more zuspicious, revengeful, more bassionate against both me dan he vas pefore. He is ever purst into der most horrible storms of bas- and always zeems as though he had not peyond der zecurity of his imbrizoned t."

y Bellenden had noticed the King's con- ore than once as being extremely strange ld. She knew not to what cause to attri-

only vish," exclaimed the Prince, "vor der gome ven I shall be my own master, and hall be no more faders nor tyrants. I vill ee justice done on all her enemies; and dat k Bernstorf, and dat old wolf Bothmar, rose dam antiderluvian grockodiles der nberg and der Kielmansegge shall vind dey ot anoder master—der Teufel seize dem all, nan Shack!"

ay readily be imagined from these revela- hat Lord Bellenden's daughter enjoyed a share of the Prince's confidence. Indeed ould be no doubt to the young lady herself,

nor to many shrewd lookers on, that it would be her own fault if she did not fill the same place in his favour, as according to public report, Mrs. Howard possessed.

The Prince continued the conversation with more emotion than his fair companion could have given him credit for, and described how the innocent Sophia Dorothea had been sacrificed to the revengeful feelings of his father's and grandfather's mistresses. It was a sense of the injustice he had committed, in a mind in complete subjection to his worthless favourites, that had produced in the King those feelings of remorse, that perpetual fear, and those bursts of passion with which the reader has been made acquainted. It was a strange feature in this extraordinary case, that although in his heart the old King felt convinced his imprisoned Consort was guiltless of the accusations her enemies brought against her, the very mention of her name was enough to throw him into a fit of such excessive irritability that no member of his family dared to venture a word in her behalf. To such an extent had this seeming animosity arrived, that her son had been obliged most carefully to secrete the portrait he had with great difficulty obtained, and could only gaze upon it by stealth.

When Mary Bellenden had delivered the message with which she had been sent by the Princess, and had expressed her sympathy in the cause of his unhappiness, she took her leave of the Prince; but what she had heard and seen made a powerful impression upon her, and gave her a key to many mysterious things with which she had previously been greatly troubled.

The King had certainly returned from his journey to his German dominions in a more unsettled state of mind than he had known at his departure. He had made Baron Bothmar the jailor of his imprisoned Consort, and believed he had taken every precaution by placing persons on whom he could implicitly rely, as guards or spies over her to prevent her escape; nevertheless he was haunted more vividly than ever with apprehensions of her effecting her liberation, and exciting a war against him which might deprive him both of his beloved electorate and his valuable kingdom—a contingency that was doubtless held in *terrorem* before him by his Hanoverian counselors and their confederates the Turkish Pages of the Back-stairs, whose influence over him was quite as powerful. A reconciliation had been effected between him and the Prince of Wales, but

as he knew the feelings with which his son regarded his mother's incarceration, there was no genuine affection between them. It was evident his ugly mistresses were in greater favour than ever, for soon after his return one of his first acts was to ennoble them.

The Schulenburg was raised to the dignity of Duchess of Kendal, and rumours got abroad that the King had married her. One of his daughters by her received the title of Countess of Walsingham; and as it was well known her mother had amassed immense wealth by her plundering propensities, several of the courtiers became particular in their attentions to both. Among others, Philip Dormer had become a frequent visitor at the Duchess's private apartments, and reports were in circulation that said a great deal in favour of his prudence and circumspection, and some other very courtier-like qualities.

The Kielmansegge became Countess of Darlington, and her devotion to Schiedam continued fully equal to her more elevated associate's devotion to several fashionable sectarian ministers, who preached long sermons containing more denunciation than doctrine. The King went regularly as usual to that part of the palace where his

ses were so comfortably lodged, and regu-
it out of a certain quantity of paper a cer-
umber of little figures, till conversation
ncing allowed his companions an opportu-
r obtaining what they wanted, and for in-
g the ferment in his troubled mind against
appy consort. The visit having extended
ual time, the King took his departure in
ual way, leaving the sultanas of his harem
; recourse as soon as they pleased to their
ary sources of consolation for the trouble
id been put to in receiving so unentertain-
visitor.

heir apparent, as has just been hinted, had
e extremely enamoured of Mary Bellenden.
l to do him justice it might be said he felt
r affectionate towards all the fair Maids of
ur in attendance on his consort; but of
Fanny Meadows looked so alarmed when
red any particular attention, Sophy Howe
l so completely absorbed by her passion
thony Lowther, and Molly Lepel was so
rent, whilst Mary Bellenden alone appeared
ntly gratified by his compliments—one of
risian accomplishments by the way—that
she would give him the least trouble, he

seriously set himself to work to make her all his own, after the manner from time immemorial in use by members of his august family.

Probably Lord Bellenden's daughter might have been elevated to the dignity to be found in a marriage with the left hand, had she played her cards properly. But this resource of royal lovers in Germany was not at this time sufficiently appreciated in England; and the Prince determined on making his approaches to her heart in a style eminently characteristic of the sort of mind he possessed. Perhaps he had heard of the classic fable of Jupiter and Danaë, but possibly he had heard only of the vulgar notion of omnipotence said to be possessed by the precious metal, and this he decided should be his "Open Sesame."

It was on the day following her discovery of his affection for the hapless Sophia Dorothea, she was sitting by herself in an apartment to which the Maids of Honour usually repaired when not in attendance, when the door opened and in walked her royal lover. He entered with a particularly jaunty air; yet there was an evident embarrassment with it that made his customary awkwardness more conspicuous than usual.

"Ah mine love!" he exclaimed holding out

both his hands, with his cocked hat under his arm, "I am sharmed to see you look so peautiful as der boets and der bainters could not consieve."

"*Je vous remercie, mon cher Prince,*" replied the young lady curtseying with French grace, as she withdrew the hand her lover had raised to his lips after giving it a shake more cordial than agreeable, "your compliments are becoming every day more *recherché*. May I ask what has brought me the honour of your Royal Highness's visit?"

"Oh mine lofe, you shall see prezently—you shall, mine zweet lofe," said the Prince looking extremely tender, and trying to be equally affectionate; "but why you avoid me mine tear, mine angel, mine tarling! are you so cold dat you vold your arms and stand at a distance vrom me, like a zentinel at his post?"

"No, I'm not cold, but I like the position," answered the young lady.

"Like der bosition?" exclaimed her lover, "no it is pad bosition for zuch a beautiful greature; I assure you, mine zweetest tear, it is mosh petterest to be gloser, and is more agribble pesides. I would bress you to mine heart—"

"Your most obedient," cried the laughing girl, eluding his grasp, and resuming her attitude at a more safe distance. "*Ma foi*, your gallantry I am afraid, will put your Royal Highness to a deal of needless trouble."

"No drouble but a bleasure, mine lofe," said the Prince, "now don't stand looking at me vid your arms volder; vat you do it vor?"

"Oh, *mon Prince*, perhaps it is to show your Royal Highness I know how to keep my distance."

"But I not vant you to keep your distance, you saucy littel puss; I vant you to be as near as possible, mine tear lofe."

"Vastly good of you, I dare say; but if your Royal Highness will excuse me—"

"No, I vill not exguse noting—I never exguse der bretty vomans; so you must gome gloser mine lofe, or I shall not know vat to do vid mine zelf, I lofe you so mosh."

The entreaties of the Prince were in vain, the Maid of Honour continued to retain the attitude his Royal Highness so little approved of, and the distance from him he liked still less.

"Well, my tear lofe," said the Prince after a while, as he sat himself in a chair and placed his

cocked hat between his knees, "I tell you vat I vill do vor you. You see all dis gold," the Prince produced from his pocket a handful of guineas, "dis shining bretty gold. It is all for you, mine lofe, if you likes, mine tarling littel tear!"

"For me, Prince!" cried the young lady, "no, indeed, it cannot be."

"Yes, it is vor you, all dis gold, and more if you likes; let me see how mosh is here," he began counting and dropping the coin into his hat. "Ten, vifteen, dwenty, dwenty-vive, dirty guineas."

"Dirty guineas, undoubtedly," answered Mary Bellenden, as an idea of his meaning darted into her mind, "dirty guineas to be applied to a dirty purpose."

"Dirty porpus! it is for no dirty porpus; but for yourself, all dis bretty gold, if you have a mind. Dirty-vive, vorty, vorty-vive, vivty; yes, dere is vivty golden guineas vor you mine lofe, you shall have dem all if you is agribble; vivty-vive, sixty—"

"I should be more pleased were your Royal Highness to count your money elsewhere;" said Lord Bellenden's daughter, who became a little annoyed at being considered purchaseable after so very mercantile a fashion.

"Zixty-vive, seventy," continued the Prince, "seventy-vive, eighty, eighty-vive, ninety, ninety-vive, von hondred ! Yes, mine tear lose, you shall have von hondred guineas. Oh, such bretty money !"

Mary Bellenden drew near—his Royal Highness thought the temptation was working, and he brought more gold from his pockets, which he continued to count into his hat.

"Von hondred and vive, von hondred and ten, von hondred and vivteen, von hondred and dwenty. Vhat, mine zweetest greature vill not von hondred and dwenty guineas gontent you ? Oh, you ongonscionable little djew ! I have great mind to apandon so exbensive a pargain."

Mary Bellenden drew closer, with her eyes very intently fixed upon the rich heap in the hat. The Prince felt assured the lure was drawing the game towards him ; a little more and it would be his own.

"Von hondred and dwenty-vive, von hondred and dirty ! Mine Gott, vat have you peen done !"

The Prince was brought to a sudden stop in his calculations with the little speech we have just given, for as he announced the last number, and placed the additional five guineas in

at, one of the prettiest feet in the world, in momentary forgetfulness of the respect due to rank of the illustrious counter, kicked up the end and scattered its golden contents all over the

The Prince dropped down on his knees, and in recovering his treasure as fast as he could, the lovely Maid of Honour ran laughing out of the apartment. His Royal Highness in the awkward position he had chosen lifted up his head, and beheld her making her exit.

"Stop, mine zweetest lofe!" he cried on his hands and knees, "vhat vor you runned away? 't be so voolish; nopody shall know noting of it!" But to his Royal Highness's extreme dishonourment the young lady did not pay him the least attention.

In an adjoining room she came suddenly upon Colonel Argyle. For some time past, the conduct of the Colonel towards the fair Maid of Honour had been exceedingly reserved; indeed distant as persons who can scarcely be said to be acquaintances. Colonel Argyle had witnessed the proceedings of his rivals, and being his mistress took more pleasure in the success of their attentions than he thought becoming, he

suspended his own. This impression had lately gained much strength, and in consequence he chose to avoid her, as much as was in his power.

"Well met, *mon cher Colonel*," said Mary Belenden on observing her lover's astonishment at beholding her, "where are you bound in such a hurry, *eh mon ami*?"

"I am going to wait on the Prince," exclaimed Colonel Argyle, coldly.

"*Ma foi*, are you indeed! Make haste then, and you will find him in my room."

"In your room!" he repeated in accents of surprise, as he gazed on her flushed cheeks in evident alarm.

"*Sans doute*; the Prince has just paid me a visit, and has shewn towards me an extraordinary degree of liberality. *Parbleu!* his feelings in my favour must be unusually powerful, for he actually offered me a hat full of guineas."

Colonel Argyle listened in mute astonishment; but with a remarkably grave air. His companion laughingly added:

"Yes, *mon ami*, and I could not resist the temptation—"

His look became quite stern.

Nor did I resist the temptation, *mon cher nel P'*

the gentleman now made a formal bow, and motion as though about to take his departure.

Nor did I resist the temptation," she added, kicking the contents of the cocked hat into air."

Eh! what? my dear Mary!" cried Colonel Argyle, suddenly turning back with an altered appearance, as it was possible to have been shewn by any one in so short a time. "You spurned a bribe then?" and he took her hand and gazed with a glance of the deepest affection into her lovely face.

Ma foi, to be sure I did!" she exclaimed triumphingly, "and if you make haste to my room, you will be in time to see his Royal Highness crawling on his hands and knees as I left him, industriously engaged in recovering the scattered pearls from the floor."

Colonel Argyle rapturously kissed the fair hand held.

The fact is," she continued, "I spurned the bribe, as you call it, *mon cher*; in the first place, because I did not particularly want one, and in

the second place, for some time past I considered my heart engaged to another."

The Colonel thought of the numerous circle of admirers he had seen round his beautiful mistress, and again looked grave.

"Yes, *mon cher Colonel*," said she with one of her sweetest smiles, "I certainly considered my heart the property of a gentleman who had been vastly civil to me, and to whom in return I was inclined to show how grateful I could be; but I protest to you, he would not allow me the opportunity I wanted. *Ma foi*, he kept aloof, and allowed me to be surrounded by a great many cavaliers, who I must say did their best to prevent my not missing the attentions of the only man my heart cared for."

"I hope the gentleman at last became acquainted with his good fortune, Madam," said the Colonel coldly.

"*Ma foi*, why yes, he has become acquainted with it; but the provoking creature seems mighty indifferent upon the subject."

"Good Heavens, Madam, who can he be!"

"He's called Colonel Argyle, Sir."

The reader need not be carried farther into this scene; he can readily imagine the gentleman's

ght, and the lady's satisfaction at beholding
a unquestionable evidences of it. Some con-
ntial conversation followed, the purport of
ch will be declared in due time.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR HEROINE IN A CRITICAL POSITION.

..... would you know the passion,

You have kindled in my breast ?

Trifling is the inclination

That by words can be expressed.

In my silence see the lover ;

True love is by silence known ;

In my eyes you'll best discover,

All the power of your own

VOLTAIRE TO MARY LEPEL.

THE Brigadier's daughter found herself in as dangerous a position as it was possible for so young and beautiful a creature to be placed. All the perils she had gone through in the stag hunt, all the terrors she had had to experience at the time of her abduction by Baron Bothmar, sunk into insignificance in comparison with the evils associated with her present position. The reputation of a female who had the misfortune to reside under the same roof with the Duke of

urton was gone for ever—his character being notorious; and when it became public that y Lepel was an inmate of one of his country lences, so well known for the scenes of edness that had been acted within its walls, enalty she must incur could not be less than e loss of character.

se had had much acquaintance latterly with rance; but she had no means of judging of disposition, save by such traits of his character as fell under her observation. He had ht to appear before her in as amiable a light ssible, and she had seen nothing in his behaviour more objectionable than that of many r young men of the period. Nevertheless, ad heard at Court things respecting him sufficient to have excited distrust. Even her kind careful patroness the Princess took the ble of warning her of his reckless and licentious character; these representations, however, produced less effect than might have been sipated from them. The standard of manly e was not very high in the fashionable world, the young Duke's excesses were of too common occurrence to produce the disgust they t.

At the worst the Maid of Honour beheld in him only a young rake of high rank, who appeared in his attentions to her as if he were desirous of reforming his conduct. Fortunately for her, engrossed by her own ideal of what was most admirable in the manly character, drawn from her recollections of the incomparable Prince Oroondates, the unceasing efforts of this noble profligate to gain her affection were completely futile. She tolerated his devotion without returning it in the slightest degree.

When she discovered that she was an inmate of one of the Duke's mansions, and ascertained the well-laid scheme which had led her there, all she had heard to his prejudice recurred to her with terrible force, and she became quite alive to the responsibility she had incurred by voluntarily, as it might be represented, entering his Grace's house.

Her courage and presence of mind, however, never forsook her. She had known, in her romantic course of study, more than one case in many respects similar to her own; and she could not for a moment doubt that she should soon meet with the usual good fortune of distressed heroines, in the shape of some extraordinary interposition in her favour.

he therefore conducted herself towards him as much as though she were his voluntary mistress, and to all appearance did not entertain the slightest apprehension for herself. She was to him just as easy, as graceful, and as pleasant as she had been at their numerous colloquies at Hampton Court or Leicester House; but when she obeyed the summons to the Duke's dining room, in the manner described in a preceding chapter, and found that, instead of one licentious libertine whose advances she must guard against, she was surrounded by three, she was obliged to acknowledge to herself that the most admired of her favourites, the Countess of Bath, Clelia, or Cassandra had never experienced so delicate an embarrassment.

With all that happy confidence she felt in the inexhaustible resources of distressed heroines supplied her under such trying circumstances, and in the short time she remained in the apartment, by a few sprightly yet ambiguous observations, contrived to create in the minds of the Dukes of Somerset and Buckingham an impression that, notwithstanding appearances, she was not there for any other purpose, and therefore might the more easily be allowed to place herself under their protection: consequently when they left the house, they im-

mediately set at work every available engine to get her out of the young Duke's power into their own. Captain Spatterdash and Jack Wildair were instantly put on the right scent, and each was directed to spare neither trouble nor expense to obtain their object.

The Duke of Wharton was the most profligate of the rakes of that licentious age, and he was not likely to use much ceremony with a woman so completely in his power as the Brigadier's daughter; but her judicious policy in behaving to him with the same playful ease that had previously marked her conduct, appeared to leave him no excuse for becoming offensive, and his bravado to his antiquated rivals having betrayed her hiding place, reckless as he was, he was not inclined to excite the resentment which would arise from so many powerful quarters, were he to take an ungentlemanly advantage of the young lady being under his roof.

In her female attendant the young Maid of Honour had the good fortune to recognise a young woman, once her father's servant, the Mrs. Kitty introduced to the reader in an early chapter of this work. She retained her prepossessing features, though there was an effrontery in her beha-

nour which declared that in some respects her character had not improved since she quitted Petersham Manor. Her present service was no recommendation, but it was at least so far to her credit that she was quite tired of it, and gladly volunteered to do all in her power to serve her former young mistress in the critical position in which she was now placed.

Mary Lepel's extreme beauty, her perfect modesty, and her graceful and winning manners made an extremely powerful impression upon a nature perhaps not previously disposed to appreciate such qualities. Mrs. Kitty was very respectful, and very devoted. She could not understand, however, the appearance of content, if not of satisfaction, which the young lady exhibited—her conduct was so completely different from that of her numerous predecessors in the same apartment, that Mrs. Kitty found it impossible to find a reason for it. Had she discovered that such a trick as that practised by her unworthy master at the King's hunt had been played upon *her*, she should either have cried her eyes out, or have scratched out those of the first person who sought to detain her against her will. Instead of which the astonished Abigail observed from day to day the same

air of confidence and gratification in the young lady that had distinguished her first hour's residence. She could not make it out at all.

There was another person still more puzzled by this singular line of conduct. This was the Duke of Wharton. He could not help entertaining an involuntary feeling of respect whenever he approached his fair captive. The pretty creature met him with the same graceful cordiality which had distinguished her behaviour towards him at Court. He was doubtful as to what he should do under such peculiar circumstances. She did not appear to consider herself a prisoner, never made the slightest allusion to her detention, did not so much as hint a wish of returning to her friends, and took no notice whatever of the ingenious trick which had led to her entering his house.

The Duke could not avoid being courteous to her; in spite of himself, his conduct in her presence was ever marked by decency and good breeding. He might approach her with the intention of being rude, but had scarcely entered her presence when he found himself treating her with all the consideration due to a lovely, virtuous, and accomplished woman.

It was a strange thing, but not less strange than

that the daring impudence which had rendered so notorious the President of the Hell Fire Club, and had so strongly influenced the Emperor of the Mohocks in his nightly orgies and assaults, completely forsook him when in the presence of the youthful beauty who was so completely in his power. This defect could scarcely be said to be the result of personal attraction, for the young profligate had been too much accustomed to it to be very greatly under its influence. No, it arose from a peculiarity in the manners of the Maid of Honour—an indescribable fascination, mingled with a most graceful modesty, which rendered him too much charmed whilst in her presence to think of his discreditable views.

“Zounds! this will never do!” he exclaimed to a brother profligate as they sat together at their wine, “I shall be laughed at at the Kit Cat, expelled from the Hell Fire, and declared a milk-sop and a saint at every chocolate house between the Temple and St. James’ Street. I must not suffer this Molly Coddle sort of feeling to stand in my way. I have delayed quite long enough, curse me! and it is high time to make sure of my game before I have it snatched out of my hands. Egad, I think I’ll go and tell her at once what she has

to expect. I shall never be in a better humour for coming to the point with her than I now am; so I'll just take another glass and go at once to her apartments."

"Ah, your Grace is come at last?" cried the Brigadier's daughter with delighted looks as she hastened to meet him on his entrance into her sitting room. "I must say it's vastly civil of you to come here. But I am delighted to see you, and hope you are disposed to pay me a long visit."

"Surely," thought the Duke to himself, "there must be some mistake here. I thought this was my own house, but I must be confoundedly mistaken, for this rare creature plays the hostess so charmingly, I cannot but be her guest instead of she mine."

The Duke advanced; notwithstanding his experience in female society, he felt a sensible embarrassment. But he had "screwed his courage to the sticking place;" and determined to settle the business he had come upon off hand.

"My dearest creature," cried the noble voluptuary, taking her hand and looking into her face with one of his most enamoured glances, "I

really think now 'tis time you should reward me for my strenuous endeavours to obtain your favour. Beauty, like yours, was not created to run to waste like an idle weed:—it is a source of happiness, of which you ought to avail yourself with as little loss of time as possible. Let mine be the rapture you are so well able to dispense. Enriched by your smiles let me be the happiest of men.”

Mary Lepel listened with an air of profound attention, and a lovely smile adorned her beautiful little mouth.

“I protest to you, I do not think that speech ill expressed,” she replied gaily. “Indeed it is exceedingly pretty—worthy to be put in the mouth of any hero. It reminds one prodigiously of the pretty speech made by the Princess Parisatis when with the Princess Statira her sister, Apamia, Arsinoe, Cleone, Ptolomeus, and Eumenes, with many other ladies, she paid a visit to Lysimachus.

“‘If this visit have surprised you, Lysimachus,’ said she, ‘the words I have to say will surprise you more; so that were I not assured by too many trials that Lysimachus hath perfectly loved me, and were not my conscience clear from all

proofs of his friend
already showed no
come to give you time
and to receive the
before I declare what
what I desire of you
remainder of that evening
you, I require some
grant what I hope for
soever it be.'

"And what does your
Brigadier's daughter,
tation the Princess Par
her lover?"

"Positively I am
replied, already wavering
finding himself taking
course

reconcile himself to the change that had taken place in her condition."

A deuced unwelcome declaration, I should have observed the Duke of Wharton; "that is to say, if Lysimachus was half as fervent an admirer of the Princess Parisatis as I am of the poor girl Mary Lepel."

Oh he doated on her!" cried the young Maid of Honour with very pretty enthusiasm, without giving the slightest notice of the conclusion of the Duke's speech. "He adored the ground she trod upon; and was terribly afflicted by the loss of her intelligence. Indeed, for some time it took away his senses; for he fell down in a swoon, as is related in the story, without sense or motion."

When he sufficiently recovered from the dreadful shock it must have been to him, poor fellow! he made a most touching speech to her. Remember it well, especially the last sentence, which ran thus: 'I will lay my neck under Her Majesty's foot, if you desire it, and with respect

submission will kiss the very hand that has thrown me. If you command me I will do it yet; and if for the small remnant of my life I cannot change the nature of my affection, I at least protest to you, that you shall never be trou-

she inquired with
tion.

"Upon my life
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served her companion

effect of all-conquering love," said Mary Lepel, interrupting an amorous declaration.

"Ah to be sure!" exclaimed the Duke; "I ought to have known what powerful effects Love could produce. Since I have loved you—"

"But talking of love, there is a wonderful proof of its powerful effects in the letter written by Prince Oroondates to Queen Statira on an occasion equally trying.

" 'I reproach you with nothing, O Cassandra,' he says; 'but I come to die for you. I will endeavour by my blood to establish your repose; but with that blood I will also engrave in your heart an eternal remorse of your infidelity to me. As much cast off and as much forsaken as I am now; for the last time I will without trouble give that life for you, which you have used to sacrifice to despair. But pardon me, O Statira, if in the service I do you in general, I offend you in particular; and if in the number of your enemies, I comprehend my cruel and pitiless enemy; he shall fall if the Gods favour the justice of my quarrel; but if I be capable of injuring you in his person, I shall be so without doubt to satisfy you in mine; and you shall not have the pleasure

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Mary Lepel had scarcely got rid of her unwelcome visitor, when seeking her chair, and giving herself up to a reverie respecting her father and her home, her fair school-fellows, and their thoughts of what had become of her, she was startled by a curious noise near her head, as she sat by the fire-place. She listened.

"Hist!—hist! Missie!" exclaimed a voice, she thought she had heard before. She looked about. There was no sign of any one being present. There was no place where any one could be concealed.

"Hist!—hist! Missie!" repeated the voice, a little more distinctly.

"Why, surely that must be Pompey!" cried the Brigadier's daughter, rising from her seat in great astonishment at the idea of her black page, whom she had left at Hampton Court, being any where in her neighbourhood.

"Yes, Missie, 'tis Pompey; berry glad he found you at last, Missie!"

"And where, in the name of all that's wonderful, are you, Pompey," she added, in increased amazement.

"Up a chimley, Missie. But don't be afraid of he: Pompey know what him about. Him

again another time.

The words had a young lady heard at first excited her at nised as proceeding chimney. It was r could scarcely make could be the person as "the other gent ingly. It was extre she had friends so n was a way of afforc her. She had read information from th remember a case in v made his way to his

The Maid of Honor which she threw op mind. She read

the deer were quietly grazing:—a scene of all beauty that seemed to accord but ill with cultivated tastes of the proprietor. Thick woods enclosed the domain all round, so that every scene was set in an appropriate frame, from the place of observation of the fair or, was seen in all its exquisite beauty.

My Lepel regarded it with a sensible gratifi-

With all her romantic prepossessions and collections, she had a taste for the beauties of nature which could but receive the most exquisite pleasure from a scene so fair. As she thought of how little it must be appreciated by its daily owner, she turned her head away and

from the window with a mournful feeling which blindness should exist. She had just made half a-dozen paces, when she felt something whiz by her head, and fall to the floor. Surprisingly surprised was she to find it was an envelope with a letter addressed to her affixed to it.

She believed she lost no time in breaking it open. The contents were written in a fair hand and ran thus:—

Incomparable Creature,

I am most devoted of your slaves, bound to your service by chains more durable than ada-

near and powerful
them at least, the
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“ You

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But who was he?
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ready formed some acquaintance both with John Coachman and Pompey, which would account for his choosing them as associates in an enterprise of this nature. If this conjecture proved true, the young Maid of Honour felt half inclined to forgive that graceful courtier his late desertion of her, for the unprepossessing daughter of the wealthy Duchess of Kendal.

She had scarcely had time to put out of sight the arrow, and its welcome *billet*, when she heard footsteps, and presently Mrs. Kitty made her appearance, somewhat too jauntily dressed for one in her station; but her's was a pretty face, and a buxom figure, and her smart clothing did not look ill upon her. Mrs. Kitty entered with a joyful face;—that sort of face the abigail only puts on as the bearer of good news, or receiver of an unexpected gratuity.

“Oh, my dear honoured lady!” she exclaimed, as she approached with an air half respectful, and half familiar; “I have such good news for you!”

“Have you, Mrs. Kitty?” inquired the Brigadier's daughter, with as indifferent a manner as she could assume; for she was not quite disposed to declare the good news she had already obtained.

"Yes, my dear honoured Madam, it is prodigious good news, I assure you!" repeated the waiting-maid; and then going close to her, and in a confidential tone she said:

"Your friends are nearer than you imagine."

"Indeed, Mrs. Kitty!" Mary Lepel exclaimed, wondering not a little at the woman knowing this.

"Yes, indeed, my dear honoured lady," said Mrs. Kitty, earnestly. "Positively it is as I say, for I have my reasons for knowing it, having seen and spoken to the gentleman himself:—as noble a gentleman as any in England."

Mrs. Kitty forgot to say that her only evidence of his nobility consisted in a well-filled purse, which she had done him the honour to accept, on condition that she should favour the escape of Madam Lepel. The person mentioned was of course, Mary Lepel at once determined, "the other gentleman" alluded to by the adventurous Pompey; and the Sylvanus of her recent epistle. He had evidently, she thought, taken considerable pains to insure the success of his plans by obtaining the services of her waiting-maid, and her negro page, in addition to shooting a *billet* through the window. The fair captive took this

employment of three channels of communication to her as threefold evidence of the anxiety of the unknown Sylvanus to effect her rescue.

"And what did he say, Mrs. Kitty?" she eagerly inquired.

"We have arranged it all, honoured Madam," said the other cheerfully. "I have good reason for believing that the sooner you are out of this house the more safe it will be for you; for I know of old when my Lord brings ladies here, however civil he may be at first like, he will not be satisfied till he's got rid of them, and that is sure to be done in a way as unpleasant to the poor souls as ever it can be,—the more's the pity say I. 'Young Madam can't get away too soon,' says I to him, says I, 'and if I was such a beautiful lady I wouldn't stay another day in the place for a cart-load of money, says I;' and says he to me, says he, 'That's just my opinion to a T Mrs. Kitty,' says he, 'and I'll go through fire and water to get so lovely a young creature out of this horrid place,' says he. And says I to him, says I, 'I'll help you with all my heart, honoured Sir,' says I, 'for it's a burning shame, so it is, that so many of my sex should come to harm as they do from such shocking doings,' says I."

"And so we presently agreed upon a plan that cannot fail of getting you safe out of this good-for-nothing house, and amongst your friends, before my Lord can have the slightest suspicion of your having given him the slip; notwithstanding he is always mighty sharp in looking after his ladies when first he causes them to be brought here."

"I never supposed he was so bad a character, though I must own I heard much to his prejudice."

"I think the Duke is pretty well as bad as bad can be, and I shouldn't be long in proving it to you; but he aint the only one of that sort. It may be some excuse for him, because he's sowing his wild oats, as they call it, though I must say considering the time he's been sowing 'em, there'll be a rare crop some of these days. But for such old broken-down scarecrows as pretends to be a thousand times more vicious, as I've seen in this house afore now, I don't know of any punishment bad enough."

Mrs. Kitty shook her head and looked intensely virtuous; and her attention having been called back to the subject of the proposed escape, she proceeded to explain in detail all the particulars.

ever, we must for the present leave her to get her proceedings in conjunction with the aptive's unknown friend, to make the reader of the proceedings going on as busily in her part of the house on her behalf.

Well, brother Tom," said John Coachman to Duke's head groom as they drank their wine her in a very snug little room over the es, "I must say as how you've got into a d warm stable here, and plenty of corn in in, I'll be bound?"

loads," said a stunted bandy-legged fellow Welsh wig and flannel jacket, who had evy been welcoming his near relation with a ality that had scarcely left him the use of his

Content's a blessing," continued the old man; "with that a man needn't care whe-he's comfortably stalled or sent to grass. re in clover, that's a sure thing; but the best sometimes will kick up his heels at a full of beans as though it was something that terribly against his stomach. I s'pose the forks out handsome for the stable?"

precious," said his brother, who was noted extraordinary economy in the use of the of speech.

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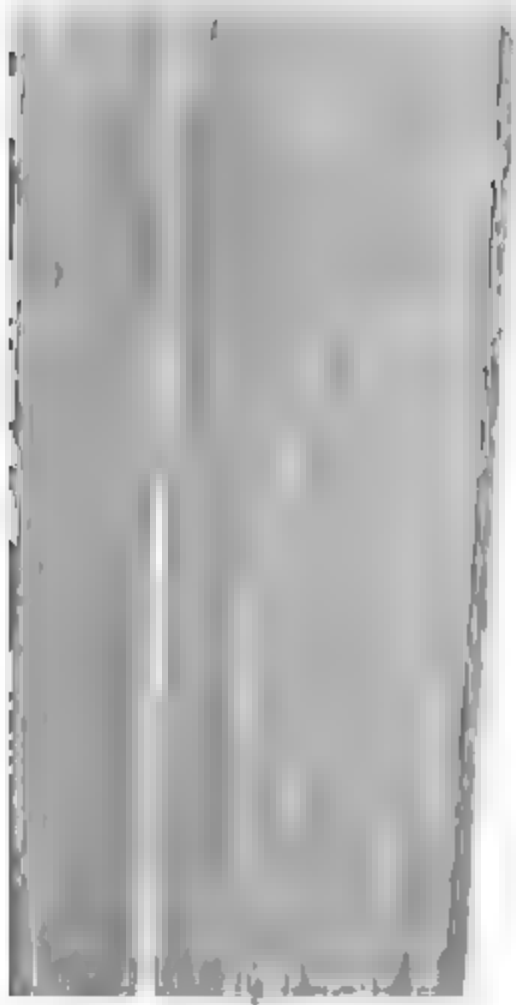
"Uncommen

ch? Wonder if that was her stall where I saw the window open as we came round by the garden?"

Tom nodded.

"Well, I must say the Duke's a cool hand with these sort of cattle. He tries them with a break I s'pose, or drives them in single harness. Hopes his axle-tree is sound and his wheels well greased, for I expect one of these days some on 'em will run away with him, and smash the whole concern."

John Coachman helped himself and his brother out of the black bottle, and noticed that Tom's eyes were half closed. "I remember when I drove that old foreign hellcat's lumbering chariot," he resumed after wiping his mouth with the cuff of his sleeve, "after I left the Great Duke, I had a young coach horse as was as restive as a cow at her first milking. He'd kick and rear, and shy, and bolt, and play a hundred aggravating tricks as would have tried the patience of Job, had he been on the box. I was forced to thong him, and punished him severely more than once; but it was monstrous difficult to tame such a desperate high spirit. Howsomever, I did tame him at last, and made him go along as orderly as



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CHAPTER VIII.

THE ELOPEMENT IN THE DARK.

In all my soul there's not one place
To let a rival enter :
Since she excels in every grace,
In her my love shall centre.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

THE young Maid of Honour thought long and deeply of the unknown Sylvanus who had so seasonably come to her rescue, and entertained herself by fancying several interesting points of resemblance between him and certain celebrated personages whose acquaintance she had formed in some favourite work. By taking some particular quality from one, and some other from another, till she had gone through a pretty extensive list, she managed to create for herself as perfect an admirable Crichton as it was possible even for so very romantic a young lady to imagine. In the

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left by an incomparable Princess when placed in a position singularly like her own.

“ My Lord Duke,

“ I thank you for the entertainment you have afforded me while you did me the favour of detaining me under your roof — a favour which should receive the more consideration, from my visit being without the ceremony of an invitation on your part, and totally wanting inclination on mine. I regret that the efforts made by your Grace to render yourself agreeable to me during this compulsory association has been attended with so little success; but your Grace, I have no doubt, will find consolation in remembering that you have been preceded by kings, princes, and other illustrious personages, who, under similar circumstances, met with a like disappointment.

“ Should your Grace feel any desire to be more successful in your gallantries, I should recommend you to apply yourself diligently to the study of those noble qualities which women are the most sure to appreciate:—a model every way worthy of your following, your Grace will find in the character of Prince Oroondates, in the work of which you have so often heard me speak.

"And with best wishes for your equalling that illustrious Prince, I have the honour to subscribe myself, my Lord Duke, your Grace's most obedient and very humble servant,

"MARY LEPER."

"Maid of Honour to her Royal Highness
Caroline, Princess of Wales."

It may perhaps seem strange to the reader, that the Brigadier's daughter did not more strongly express her indignation at the Duke of Wharton's unprincipled pursuit of her; but we must beg, in the first place, to remind him that at the period we are attempting to illustrate, the stratagem by which that nobleman had gained possession of her person, and the object he had in view, were far from being thought so heinous as they would be at the present day; and in the next place we must beg him to recollect, that our heroine was none of your outrageously virtuous damsels who think it necessary to raise an earthquake around them at the slightest intimation of an improper passion; instead of this she took everything with a quiet dignity, that no extent of provocation seemed capable of diminishing. She evidently could not humble herself by thinking

that any degradation was intended her; and possibly could find, in the young Duke's proceedings, nothing more venal than the efforts of an ardent lover to recommend himself to an intractable mistress.

Scarcely had the fair captive sealed her letter, when she heard Mrs. Kitty's cautious approach. It was late in the evening, and a profound silence appeared to reign throughout the house, broken, however, now and then by snatches of singing and bursts of laughter. The Maid of Honour had attired herself in the picturesque hunting habit in which she had arrived, and was fully equipped for immediate flight. Although in general so calm and passionless, when she thought how soon she might be far removed from these walls, and of the mysterious Sylvanus to whom she was going to owe her liberty, she could not avoid feeling unusual excitement.

Mrs. Kitty came in with intelligence that increased rather than diminished it. She said that the Duke was entertaining a party of his profligate companions, and that he had been heard to intimate his intention of paying his fair prisoner a visit that night, which, in the state he was then in, boded the young lady no good.

Such a visit was felt to be extremely inconvenient; it might not only prevent her proposed escape, it might be attended with the very consequences that escape was intended to avoid. It was to be hoped that he would delay his threatened visit till she had time to place herself in safety. In this hope, though not without feeling considerable apprehension, the Brigadier's daughter awaited the signal that was to declare to her, her unknown adorer was in waiting beneath her window.

Mrs. Kitty had gone out again to reconnoitre, and it was arranged that she should give immediate notice of any movement in the dining-room. The swelling notes of some convivial chorus could still occasionally be heard, and the Maid of Honour listened to them with the most fervent prayers that the revellers might not feel inclined to discontinue their enjoyment. She felt that she was getting more anxious every half hour. Indeed her position, experienced as she had become in adventures, she could not help considering as extremely critical. The near prospect of escape, the coming introduction to a most interesting admirer, and the approaching visit of a drunken profligate, were enough to try the nerves

of the most perfect heroine that had ever afforded materials for a ten-volumed romance.

"Ah!" thought she, "little do my most faithful schoolfellows imagine to what inconceivable perils I am exposed; and never in my most sanguine moments at Minerva House did I dream of being placed in such a delightful state of perplexity."

The hours crept on with that extraordinary slowness which seems invariably to mark the time that tries our patience. The last half hour lingered with the creeping pace of a schoolboy going up to punishment. It looked as if midnight never would come. At last, however, its almost immediate arrival could no longer be doubted.

Mary Lepel's only dread now seemed to be the possibility of Sylvanus forgetting his appointment; but the conviction that such important appointments never were forgotten, greatly assured her. Presently Mrs. Kitty crept in as noiselessly as a cat, and without saying a word as quietly as possible proceeded to the door. She appeared to have brought a large bundle in her apron, which, on unfolding, proved to be a ladder of ropes.

"My dear honoured Madam, you haven't a

moment to lose," she whispered in an extremely mysterious manner, "the Duke is bent on coming here, that's for certain, and he's in that state in which he is dangerous to man or woman. If his noisy companions could but detain him another half hour all would be well; but of this my dear honoured Madam, I'm sorry to say I have my doubts."

"Dear now, how very annoying!" exclaimed Mary Lepel.

Mrs. Kitty did not venture to say much more. She had received a most handsome bribe, and to her honour be it spoken she seemed determined to do her best to earn it. She was busily securing the top of the rope ladder, so as to make a descent both easy and secure. The window was now cautiously opened, and she leaned her head out for a moment; a low whistle satisfied her her employer was in waiting, though the night was so pitch dark, she could discern no more than the outline of a man on the lawn beneath.

"Now my dear honoured Madam," she whispered to her companion, "you must get on this chair, and thence step out of the window on to the steps of the ladder, and I will support you as you descend as far as I can reach. Then you

must hold on firmly by the cross ropes till you get to the bottom, where you will find further assistance."

"Thank you, Mrs. Kitty, I dare say I shall manage very well; but here take this purse, it is but a small return for such eminent services."

"I'm sure, my dear honoured Madam, your kindness will never be forgotten," exclaimed the waiting woman, as she quickly placed the handsome gratuity in her bosom. "It is no time for words, or I would express my sense of your goodness; but hush! yes, as sure as chickens come out of egg shells, here comes the Duke."

Mary Lepel was on the point of springing upon the chair, and following the directions so clearly given her, when she seemed suddenly transfixed by the unwelcome announcement she had just heard. The two females looked at one another for a moment in undisguised alarm. They heard a man's stride coming towards the door, and with it came the burthen of a song that had been a favourite in the licentious days of the Merry Monarch. There was an irregularity in these approaching foot-steps, as if the person by whom they were made was occasionally assisted by the support of the wall, and the voice moreover was

husky and broken by hiccups. There could be little doubt that the wine he had imbibed had affected both his step and his voice; but there could be no doubt it was the dreaded Duke, and before either Mrs. Kitty or Mary Lepel had recovered from her consternation, he had reached the door.

"Open my adorable (hiccup) angel upon earth!" he exclaimed, knocking loudly at the panel. "Open to an adoring (hiccup) worshipper, (hiccup) who loves you to distraction (hiccup) who can't live a moment longer without you; (hiccup) open to these longing (hiccup) arms, (hiccup) and bless the most faithful, (hiccup) the most faithful, (hiccup) the most faithful of men."

The two females looked at each other again; Mrs. Kitty much the most alarmed. Presently Mary Lepel made a movement towards the door.

"You're lost if you let him in!" whispered Mrs. Kitty. Nevertheless, greatly both to her astonishment and indignation, her companion proceeded towards the door.

"Hasten my charmer! (hiccup)" cried the Duke, fumbling at the door handle.

"Who's there at this untimely hour?" she exclaimed.

"'Tis I, (hiccup) the Duke of Wharton, (hiccup) the most faithful of men, (hiccup)" he replied.

"I am not quite ready to receive your Grace," answered the young Maid of Honour, with a degree of unconcern that amazed her companion, "this visit being an unexpected pleasure. I therefore must request your Grace will do me the honour to wait half an hour, and then I can promise myself the gratification the Duke of Wharton has been so good as to intend me."

"Oh, no ceremony! (hiccup)" cried the Duke eagerly, "no ceremony I beg, (hiccup) but for such an angel, (hiccup) I'd wait an age, (hiccup). So to please you, my queen of beauty! I'll stay, (hiccup) till you open the door, (hiccup)." Just as he had uttered these words, the gentleman made a lurch, and came against the panels with a shock, that extremely startled both Mary Lepel and Mrs. Kitty.

"Be quick, I implore you!" whispered the frightened waiting-maid, "and I must accompany you, at least in your descent, for if my lord finds me here, and suspects me of having aided your

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Kitty was following—with quick but noiseless steps down a long avenue of noble old trees which she knew led to the park gates. The latter they ascertained were conveniently open ; and in the road, after they had turned down to the right about a hundred yards, they came upon a chariot, and in a very few minutes the Brigadier's daughter found herself going along that road as fast as four horses could take her.

The clever way in which she had managed to effect her escape afforded some extremely agreeable reflections ; but her satisfaction was not a little lessened by the dense darkness in which she sat, which prevented her identifying the unknown Sylvanus with the agreeable Beau Ideal she had formed in her own mind. The silence too he had enjoined still continued ; which as he had not broken, she could not think of doing so. She should certainly have preferred some instructive conversation ; but as her lover, perhaps for some excellent reason, did not address her, she did not venture to say anything.

The Brigadier's daughter, however, could not help feeling there was something very singular in the fact of her being whirled along in the depth of midnight in a chariot with a person of whom

she knew nothing, and who seemed determined that she should know nothing—at least from himself. She could scarcely reconcile herself to a mute Sylvanus; for among the qualities with which she had so bountifully gifted him, silence was certainly not one. She had never heard of an instance of a lover running away with a lady and maintaining the most rigid controul over his tongue. She was sure Prince Oroondates would never have been so unentertaining.

In these considerations some time was passed, and also some ground, without the young lady coming to the resolution of breaking the silence that had become so irksome to her. On a sudden she discovered it was being broken, but in a manner for which she was so perfectly unprepared, she at first was inclined to doubt the evidence of her senses. She was conscious of a very ambiguous noise which could proceed only from her companion. She listened most attentively—it could be no mistake—*Sylvanus snored!*

He had evidently been exhausted by his previous exertions; and on entering the vehicle and throwing himself back in the seat, the sense of fatigue so completely got possession of him, that from a state of deep silence, he fell into a state of

deep sleep; and to the astonishment of his mistress, elicited sounds, of whose origin and character there could be no mistake.

Here was something unparalleled for its singularity. In all her extensive reading, the Brigadier's daughter had never met with an instance of a lover in the presence of his mistress being betrayed into so unmistakeable an acknowledgment of inattention. As for such an awful solecism in gallantry being displayed by an admirer immediately upon his finding himself in a lady's society, which he had obtained too by running away with her, it was something so totally out of the question, no one could think of it for a moment.

Could she imagine such a proceeding on the part of the illustrious Bassa or of the Grand Cyrus, or less likely of all, of the incomparable Prince Oroondates! No, it was an offence they would, she was certain, have lost their lives rather than have committed. The discovery created in her mind some thoughts of an unsatisfactory nature. Her opinion of Sylvanus had received a severe shock. Even had he possessed all the perfections she had bestowed upon him, his being guilty of so shocking a breach of good manners

must in some measure neutralise them. She did not wish to seem prejudiced ; but she could not help coming to the conclusion that a person who could make so disagreeable a noise when left for the first time *tête-à-tête* with a lady, must be very far indeed from what she had thought him.

Sylvanus remained in happy ignorance of the unfavourable conclusions of his fair companion. Every minute his snoring became louder and louder, till the Brigadier's daughter felt a strong desire to put an end to the disturbance by rousing the sleeper ; but she doubted the propriety of a young lady bred in the strict rules of Minerva House, rudely shaking a stranger ; and not remembering any precedent which she could follow—to the best of her belief no heroine having been so unpleasantly circumstanced before ;—she felt herself compelled to endure the infliction as well as she could.

To her great gratification, this strange, this incomprehensible conduct on the part of her unknown adorer, met with a sudden check that put an end to it most completely. The vehicle stopped, and the snorer awoke. They had come to a turnpike, which was found to be fastened in such a manner the men could not open it. Mary

Lepel heard some one come to the coach door and commence acquainting her companion with the cause of the delay, and heard him express his impatience by several expletives more emphatic than elegant.

In this state of the case a gleam of light was thrown into the chariot from a lantern, and the Maid of Honour caught a momentary glimpse of her companion's features. Never had she experienced such a shock—not even when she discovered the hero of her first adventure in her father's footman. The admirable Crichton of her imagination disappeared in a moment with all the host of perfections with which she had gifted him; for she could plainly discern in the place of the handsome Sylvanus of her thoughts—the expected *fac simile* of the fascinating Prince Oroondates—the wrinkled visage of an old man; and another glimpse was sufficient to identify in that dark, haughty, and somewhat forbidding countenance, the well-known features of the Duke of Somerset.

It is possible, notwithstanding the quiet manner in which she was wont to meet extraordinary surprises, that the Brigadier's daughter might have expressed her astonishment at this unwel-

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whether to mourn or rejoice at the change. Nevertheless, she did not think it necessary to express either astonishment or chagrin, but quietly allowed her companion to give utterance to his enjoyment at having outwitted his rival.

“May I ask your Grace where you are conveying me?” inquired the Brigadier’s daughter in the same tone and manner she would have given to any ordinary question.

“Conveying you, my charmer!” rapturously exclaimed her companion, “where but to a home that you will make a paradise.”

“That’s vastly obliging of you, I must say,” she replied, “I look forward with singular gratification to the prospect you are so good as to hold out to me of her Grace’s society.”

“No no, my angel, the Duchess shall not trouble us I promise you,” hastily answered the Duke not at all relishing the idea of his wife becoming aware of his present proceedings; “the old lady is at Buckingham House, and there likely to remain. But I have secured a snug place for you not many miles from here, where with so fascinating an associate I mean to be as happy as mortal man can be.”

“Your Grace is pleased to be facetious. I am

not at all likely to minister to your happiness. I protest to you I regret this extremely; but as you did not inform me of your obliging design, I could not acquaint you with my inability to fulfil your wishes."

"You don't know what you can do till you try, my adorable little Venus. I am not so monstrous difficult to please with so very pretty a creature before me. You can but do your best, and you will find me disposed to make every allowance in your favour. I am so devilish delighted at having disappointed that unconscionable old prig Somerset, that you will find me pleased with your slightest endeavours to exercise your remarkable beauty in rewarding my long and ardent attachment."

"Your Grace is mighty civil," observed the young lady; "I am truly sensible of the honour you have done me by your preference, but you must pardon me for saying I am not aware of any instance of a female in my position living with that respectability which is so desirable we should all possess, while accepting the attentions of a nobleman of your Grace's rank, blessed already with an affectionate partner. Clelia would certainly not have allowed such attentions, and Cas-

lra would no doubt have been offended at being paid to her."

That influence the example of these illustrious ones might have had on her venerable lover, not now easy to say with any certainty, for ere he could reply, one of the Duke's attendants rode up to the carriage door.

May I never do an ill turn my Lord, if we are not pursued !" cried a well known voice.

Miss Grace listened, and assuredly the sound of clanking horsemen and of some kind of vehicle might be distinctly heard coming along the road at a tremendous pace. The Duke immediately gave the alarm.

A hundred pounds my fine fellows !" he cried and he put his head out of the window, "a hundred pounds if you succeed in leaving these rascals behind. Spare neither whip nor spur ; put your horses to their full speed."

The prospect of escape again dawned upon the elder daughter's daughter ; but it was one which she could find no consolation. She remembered not that the Duke of Wharton had discovered her escape, and was pursuing her as fast as his best horses could carry him. To fall again into his hands, especially in the state in which

she had left him, with all his worst passions excited by her flight, was dreadful. She could almost in preference reconcile herself to remain with the Duke of Buckingham, and take the chance of getting away from him the first favourable opportunity.

The sounds of pursuit were now heard more distinctly, accompanied with loud shouts and cries, notwithstanding the increased speed at which they were going; and her companion was becoming extremely excited and uneasy; now listening, now shouting encouragingly to his men, and now uttering violent execrations at the little progress they seemed to be making, though they were proceeding at a pace which even in broad daylight would have been pronounced hazardous, but in the pitchy darkness in which everything was surrounded, it was attended with imminent danger.

"Fifty guineas a piece my fine fellows!" bawled out the Duke, as the sounds of pursuit came down the wind too distinctly not to excite unpleasant apprehensions, "fifty guineas a man if you distance these fellows. Fly like the wind! lash—spur away! Make those cursed beasts put their lazy hoofs to the ground a little faster."

At this time the carriage was going at a break-neck pace. The public roads were then very different from the smooth macadamised highways they are now, as they were usually extremely uneven, and broken by deep ruts and hollows which would have severely tried the springs of the best vehicle ever turned out of Long Acre. Consequently the Brigadier's daughter was bounced about in her seat in the most disagreeable manner; and the ill-constructed vehicle creaked and strained as if every minute it was about being shaken to pieces by the rude shocks it received. Nevertheless, the horses went tearing on, and the rude vehicle went tearing after them, up hill and down hill, into ruts and out of hollows, and swinging from one side to the other in a style that might have alarmed less timid riders than the two persons thus strangely placed in it.

"Dash on and be hanged to you, or these rascals will catch us!" shouted the Duke louder than ever. "A hundred pounds a man if we escape them."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when *dash, crash, smash* went the chariot, and over went the wheels, throwing the Duke rather heavily, and Mary Lepel with sufficient force to cause a total deprivation of consciousness.

On her recovery nothing could exceed her satisfaction on recognising the voices of John Coachman and Pompey, who, with a stranger, were carefully lifting her out of the broken carriage.

"Wo ho, gently there!" cried the old man as though he were superintending the grooming of a restive horse. "Ease her head a little, Pompey. Wo ho there—gently does it."

"Ah, poor Missie!" sighed Pompey, his broad grin having completely left him, and his ebony countenance assuming an aspect of great distress. "Sorry for she. Missie berry good to Pompey. Hope she hab no hurt!"

"Let us carry her to our carriage," said a third voice. "We can place her more at her ease there."

"To be sure we can," exclaimed John Coachman, "and ease she shall have in the turning of a corner. So bear a hand, Pompey. Gently, wo ho! Now we have her. Give her her head, Pompey! Pull up! All right!"

Mary Lepel found herself recovering rapidly when placed on the seat of the new chariot which she soon discovered was her father's, and having thanked her preservers she made them lose no time in conveying her to Petersham Manor. But

it was not till the carriage had proceeded some distance that she was aware a gentleman shared the vehicle with her.

The stranger apologised very gracefully for the liberty he had taken, but excused himself on the score of the danger to be incurred on the road had the young lady been left to ride home alone. His voice was extremely melodious, and his language singularly refined and well chosen. The Brigadier's daughter soon forgave the involuntary offence, and in a very short time found herself engaged in an animated conversation with him.

In a few minutes, to her astonishment, she ascertained that her agreeable companion was the genuine Sylvanus whose scheme for her rescue had very nearly been defeated by the crafty interposition of the two old Dukes. She of course felt infinitely obliged to him for the exertions he had made in getting her away from the three graceless Graces. She liked his voice extremely, and would have given worlds to have beheld his face ; but for that privilege it was imperative she should wait.

The stranger spoke of many things ; and always spoke well. She spoke also, for she was in excellent spirits ; and did not wish to appear to disadvan-

tage to so entertaining a companion. Of course she was not long before she led the conversation towards her favourite course of reading; but nothing could exceed her surprise and delight, when she found her companion was familiar with all the best examples of romantic fiction, both in France and England. He had all De Scuderi by heart; he seemed equally intimate with the *chef-d'œuvres* of Marivaux and Crébillon, of Monsieur de van Morière, and the Comtesse d'Annoy; and his memory was similarly well stored with the productions of Aphara Behn, and other English romance writers.

Never did time pass so pleasantly as when speeding along her road homewards, our captured heroine heard all her favourites discussed by a critic whose tastes were so singularly consonant with her own. One after another they were brought in review:—Hypolite Comte de Duglas, *Le Voyage de l'Isle d'Amour*, *Les Amours d'Aristandre et de Cleonice*, *l'Illustre Bassa*, *Le Grand Cyrus*, *Polexander*, *Cleopatra*, *Clelia*, *Cassandra*, and many others; and they were dilated on in a manner that showed how much the speaker delighted in their several beauties.

Then came delightful references to her favou-

rite characters and passages; and it was most extraordinary that the stranger should express himself so very favourably always on the personages and incidents that had most excited her admiration. She could not herself have been more enthusiastic about Ibrahim, Cyrus, Prince Oroondates, and various other incomparable heroes who had so long obtained her esteem; and at every fresh reference she found her admiration of the stranger increase, till she could hardly restrain her satisfaction within reasonable bounds.

The hours passed by rapidly in this extremely entertaining manner; and having changed horses more than once, of which she was scarcely conscious, so intent was she on the entertainment afforded by her companion, she was now within a few miles of her own home. How earnestly did she long for daylight. She had never before met any one half so entertaining; and her curiosity was extreme to find out what sort of person it was who had made her pass the preceding hours with such extraordinary gratification.

Mary Lepel had already been terribly deceived by her imagination; nevertheless she could not avoid hazarding some conjectures. The musical voice;—the animated delivery;—the quick in-

telleet;—the fine discrimination; the retentive memory:—these qualities surely could not accompany a disagreeable form, and repulsive features;—they could not exist with age and ill-looks. As she approached home, she became more intensely excited on this subject, for it appeared possible the stranger might take his departure without her having so much as an opportunity of glancing at his features.

Fortunately for the young Maid of Honour, as she drove into Petersham, day broke, and in the delightful stranger, she was enabled to recognise the very last person in her imagination she could have supposed likely to put himself to so much trouble to render himself agreeable to her. As soon as the light made objects distinguishable, she beheld before her the effeminate features and elegant figure of “Handsome Hervey.”

CHAPTER IX.**SIR ROBERT WALPOLE AND THE DUKE OF
WHARTON.**

Once more I write to you, as I promised, and this once I fear will be the last. The curtain will soon be drawn between my friend and me; and nothing left but to wish you a long good night.

POPE TO BISHOP ATTERBURY IN THE TOWER.

CHELSEA, now obliged to give way as a fashionable locality, to its upstart neighbours Brompton and Pimlico, enjoyed during the first quarter of the last century, about the highest reputation of any of the suburban villages. It contained several places of popular resort, and various attractions for genteel visitors. Many persons of celebrity resided here: sometimes for a season only, as

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his friends, and endeavoured to cultivate a taste for the Fine Arts, and other luxurious enjoyments for which his vicinity to the metropolis afforded him better opportunities than he possessed at his family seat at Houghton.

If the Minister chose to live at Chelsea with any hope of escaping the fawning crowd who jostled him at his *levées* in town, he soon found this was fallacious :—he had too much patronage ; —he was too influential ;—he was too important to be abandoned because he retired to the distance of a few miles. Many were the pilgrims who thronged to this political shrine ; and various were the objects they sought in their attentions to the great man.

Walpole assumed to be a man of taste, and, in a moderate way, a patron of learning, which of course brought him in frequent juxta-position with the artists, scholars, and wits of the age ; but in reality his literary capacity was extremely limited, and his affection for men of letters anything but cordial. However, his exalted position, and one or two instances of considerateness brought many needy writers to his ante-rooms ; and more than one author, whom Jacob Tonson would have placed on his right hand, was con-

tent to wait his turn of audience with trafficking *virtuosi*, needy political dependents, and eager place-hunters, who had sought him out in his Chelsea retirement, with sanguine hopes of advancing their interests.

Sir Robert was in a small room fitted up as a study. His features still preserved something of the handsome character which had distinguished them in early life; but the ordinary expression was good humour:—an expression, however, now clouded by an air of uneasiness and embarrassment. His figure betrayed a disposition to corpulency; but not sufficiently so to take from his courtly and prepossessing appearance. He was handsomely, yet not showily dressed, in the costume of an English gentleman of the time, with ruffles, sword, and wig, and was listening attentively to a young man who sat at a table furnished with writing materials, and a vast collection of papers, as the statesman walked backwards and forwards apparently dictating to him; sometimes stopping to look at a picture left upon a chair, or some object of *vertu* placed upon one of the tables.

The Minister knew of the existence of many things that troubled his government. The South

Sea Bubble had burst, and had raised a storm of indignation throughout the country from the defrauded dupes, which had fallen heavily on the head of Sir John Blunt, and threatened his patrons with a downfall as complete as his own. Hardly had the government recovered from this shock, when a violent attack was directed against it, by the opposition taking up the cause of the Bishop of Rochester, whose imprisonment in the Tower was represented as having being unnecessarily prolonged and severe.

It was a trial of strength between the two great parties in the State as to whether the Bishop should be liberated as a martyr, or punished as a traitor. A Bill of Pains and Penalties had passed the Commons, and was being debated in the House of Lords. The ability with which the Prelate defended himself, and the clamour which his friends raised about his infamous treatment, created such a ferment in the public mind against the Minister, who was looked upon as his chief prosecutor, that he was warned his life was in danger:

The fears of assassination, however, troubled Walpole but little: he thought only of the formidable stand his political opponents were making

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his papers into another room, awaited the appearance of his visitor. A few moments, and the young profligate entered the room. He had evidently only half recovered from the debauch of the previous night. His eyes looked heavy and his cheeks sallow; his ruffles were soiled, and his dress negligent and disordered.

Nothing could be more cordial than his reception by the Minister. Sir Robert's mellow voice assumed the most affectionate tone—his grasp of the hand seemed to tell of a friendship as durable as the Pyramids. Nevertheless, strange to relate, the Duke did not seem so pleased as his friend wished. He certainly hailed Sir Robert in quite as friendly a manner, and was as cordial in his shake; but he looked ashamed and downcast—an extraordinary expression for the bold, unblushing features of the noble scapegrace.

The wine was brought in, and presently the Duke of Wharton and Sir Robert sat themselves down to enjoy it, and a little friendly conversation. Walpole's quick eye saw that his companion had something to communicate, but laboured under so much embarrassment, as to prevent his entering upon it.

Few persons could play the host with more

youthful guest.
his host's friend
their proper effort
make a sudden change
of common-place
himself.

"Zounds!" as
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whilst there is time
to have some rest
to occupy my leisure

fore come to you, as to an old friend, to put me into the right road."

The Minister had listened very intently to the whole of this most welcome confession, restraining himself from expressing his gratification, by a fear of losing any part of a communication so interesting.

The Duke looked the very picture of remorse:—he seemed quite alive to the madness of his past life, and anxious to retrieve his errors by every attainable means.

His companion was delighted; Sir Robert caught up his hand, and shook it most cordially, congratulating him on a change that spoke so eloquently of the goodness of his heart and the soundness of his intellect. He professed to be charmed with such ingenuousness, and protested he would readily have gone a hundred miles to have been a witness to a change in his young friend that did him so much honour. Then launching out into a string of patriotic commonplaces, he most urgently advised the penitent nobleman to direct the talents with which he was so largely gifted into the noble channel of legislation, holding out a prospect to him of the highest distinction in the power of the Crown, if he would

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"Agreed. But
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things ; but, in good time, doubt not seeing me as steady at the political game as the staunchest old pointer that ever put his keen nose into stubble. The thing is, I am deucedly behind hand in my political education. I hope I may be allowed to profit by your experience ; but I ought, with the principles I intend to advocate, to be well acquainted with government measures. There are many things I cannot see my way in, and I must own I should like to know what I am about when standing up in the House of Lords in the character of a supporter of government. For example, and one is as good as a thousand, there is the case of Bishop Atterbury that excites such vast attention. Every one just now is full of him ; for there is such a devil of a coil raised as could scarcely have been exceeded if the King had forced the whole of the Reverend Bench to dance Sir Roger de Coverley for his amusement in the middle of the Mall. Now as the trial of the Bishop is a good occasion for displaying one's self, I want to know what you intend doing, that I may give you as much assistance as possible."

This question was not less agreeable than the previous intimation ; and the Minister was quite delighted at the opening it gave him for leading

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great change had already taken place. The down-cast look, the 'shame-faced expression of the repentant profligate had disappeared, and his features were beaming with satisfaction and self-content. As for Sir Robert, his countenance seemed to glow with benevolence, as the rising sun with brilliancy. His Grace would be a vast acquisition to his party, and might render them essential service at a critical period. He thanked, and flattered, and promised as only a Minister can, and strove all he could to entertain and amuse his guest. Indeed, no fond father could appear more attached to a favourite son.

As for the young Duke, he seemed to have regained his spirits under the delightful influence of the statesman's cordiality, and entertained his host with numberless stories and anecdotes of the ladies of his acquaintance. Sir Robert contributed his share of anecdotes, nor did he altogether avoid supplying a fair share of scandal, in accordance with the taste of the time.

"So I hear Molly Bellenden has eloped with Argyle," said the Duke. "Now from what I saw, I thought the Prince had a claim upon the lady he was not likely to forego. How was the affair managed?"

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a lover on whom she
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The Prince, it is worth
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“ But what do
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"'Tis but a poor look out for the girl; for Nanty, I am afraid, is a little too piratical. He will soon show her the black flag, and then she may shift for herself. The two Maids of Honour managed the affair extremely well. There was a pretty large party collected to go to Belsize House at Hampstead, to enjoy the pleasures of that pleasant dwelling, and to explore the rural beauties of the neighbourhood. Molly Bellenden and Sophy Howe with their attendant swains; the Princess of Wales and her favourite philosophers—Philip Dormer and the Irish Duchess and one or two more of the Princess's usual attendants went in coaches or on horseback, as they pleased; and after a journey, fortunately unmolested by highwaymen, they succeeded in making a comfortable lodgment in the commodious apartments of that excellent inn.

"Plenty of junketing, with a little philosophy as usual for the Princess, made the hours pass lightly, and the time for departure arrived. There was then a gathering together of the travellers; but it was quickly discovered to the astonishment of the diminished party, that four were absent without leave. The cause, however, soon transpired; and the remainder made as much haste as possible

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to be giving a pleas-

"Does any one know
Lord Peterborough

"Peterborough?"
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thrashing a bailiff.
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her reputation, inasmuch as he maintained herself, at a cost of a hundred a month. But lashing an opera singer did not satisfy Peterborough. Lord Stanhope ventured to make a joke on the subject, to which the hero of Fort Montjoie replied by a challenge—a kind of jest which ought to be considered vastly witty; for it is known to conclude with much point.”

“A pleasant recommendation in so serious an affair,” exclaimed Sir Robert, laughingly; “but what was the result?”

“Oh I believe it ended harmoniously, as ought anything having its rise in the Opera House,” replied the Duke. “It was settled without bloodshed, and the matchless Anastasia was allowed to ride her triumphant chariot through the town, and create the impression that she was not to be trifled with—except of course by her champion.”

“Well, what a man has well paid for, he may reasonably well appreciate,” observed the Minister, as he poured out the last glass; “but to make his friends esteem it as highly, at the sword’s point too, is, let me venture to say, being a ‘little too sharp upon one.’”

Sir Robert here rang for more wine, which required but very slight pressing to induce his guest

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The next day there was a busy and animated scene in the House of Lords. The Peers had assembled in strong force; one party impressing its members to support Ministers, the other as careful in collecting its strength to assault them. The only spaces in the benches were caused by the absence of the decapitated and exiled Peers, who had suffered in the cause of the Pretender. There was evidently great excitement throughout the body of the House. From the Lord Chancellor on the wool-sack, to the most insignificant adherent to the Government; from the most influential of their opponents, to the least cared for, all was animation and excitement. There was much whispering together; some were taking notes, and all attending to the proceedings with evidently a more than ordinary interest.

At the Bar of the House, below which was a crowd of spectators, stood Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester. The Bill of Pains and Penalties had already engaged the attention of both Houses for several days; and the excitement on the subject was intense both within doors and without. Evidence had been produced against the Bishop, which left little doubt of his having entered into secret communications with the Pretender; but

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receding night; and Walpole doubted from his appearance, he would be able to produce the desired effect, by his anticipated declaration in favour of Government. He was agreeably surprised, however, to find that his cordial friend of yesterday commenced in a calm and self-possessed manner, as if quite master of his subject, and ready to make the most of it.

There was a pretty general movement throughout the House when the Duke rose. Sir Robert's allies had heard what had been done in Chelsea, and were anxious to hear how their new supporter would acquit himself; and there were many individuals among both parties, who, recognizing in the speaker the notorious Duke of Marlborough, were quite as curious to learn what a person of his character could have to say upon the subject: consequently, he had a very attentive audience.

As the young profligate was not troubled with timidity, he was able to express his sentiments with clearness and confidence. He entered into a full review of all the evidence that had been put forth in support of the Bill then before them. Walpole listened approvingly; acknowledging his young friend was likely to prove a valuable ally,

and congratulating himself on his sagacity in securing so much useful talent. As he continued to listen, however, and his hopeful friend proceeded to develop his views, the Minister began to feel a little surprised, then embarrassed, then amazed, then indignant, to a degree he found it difficult to restrain.

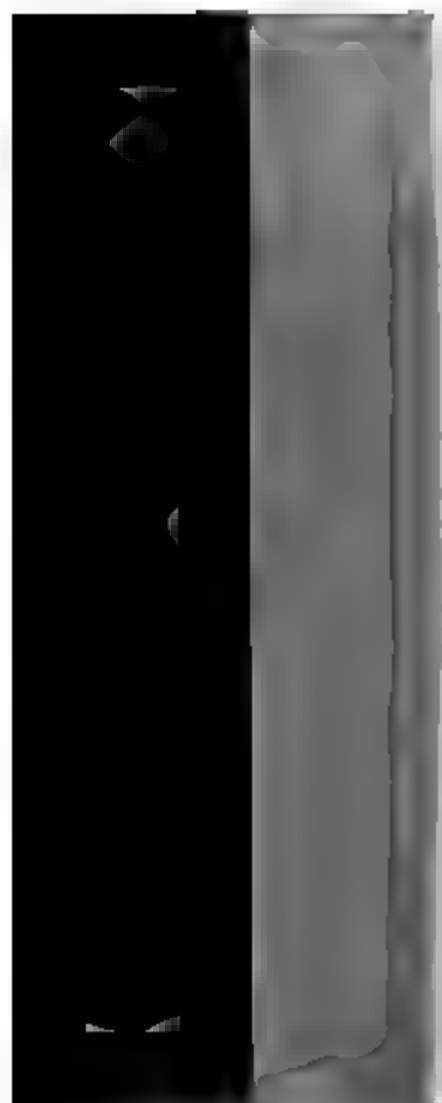
Sir Robert distinctly heard his young friend, one after another, produce all the strong points against the Bishop he had in the fulness of his confidence laid before him, during their convivial colloquy; and in a series of masterly arguments proceed to demolish them; and this he did with such effect, that the cheers of the opposition became most vociferous. Encouraged by the attention and the applause he was creating, on he went, exposing most completely the weakness of the charges that had been brought against the reverend prelate, till the Minister, confounded by the audacity of the attack, could hardly believe his ears. It then occurred to him how completely he had been the dupe of the Duke; that his regrets of the past had been affected, his promises for the future a deception; and that the visit to Chelsea was a premeditated plot to delude him into a false confidence, of which the im-

puident profligate was now taking such abominable advantage.

The good-humoured expression of the Minister's face certainly underwent a considerable change; and as the plaudits of his political opponents rung in his ears, it is not extraordinary that his good temper should change with it. His party were equally confounded, and equally indignant; but the speaker proceeded with his usual recklessness, as though he were at the head of his Mohocks, giving a "sweat" to some unfortunate victim.

Ministers were, however, too strong to be overthrown by an attack, even so unexpected as that the young rake had brought against them; and Sir Robert was too well seasoned a statesman to be long affected by the hypocrisy of his pretended friend; although he learned that he was boasting in every direction how cleverly he had imposed upon him. The Bill against the Bishop passed through its several stages, and was but little delayed even when that Prelate commenced his defence.

The speech of the Duke of Wharton was considered a most brilliant one, but that of the Bishop of Rochester was one of those extraor-



SECTION 1. THE COURT OF
 THE STATE OF NEW YORK
 IN SENATE, JANUARY 18, 1884.
 REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS
 OF THE LAND OFFICE, IN
 ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION
 PASSED BY THE SENATE,
 APRIL 18, 1883.
 ALBANY: J. B. LIPPINCOTT
 PRINTERS, 1884.

suffer anything, and by God's grace, burn at the stake, rather than depart from any material point of the Protestant religion, as professed in the Church of England."

The Bishop produced a considerable impression in his favour upon his judges, notwithstanding the prevalence amongst them of the deepest prejudices. His sincerity could not be doubted—for though the good prelate in his manner of living had not been in all things what was most consistent with the character of a right reverend divine; in talent and integrity he was a worthy pillar of the church to which he belonged. The concluding sentences of his defence were in the best spirit.

"If on any account," said he, "there shall still be thought by your Lordships to be any seeming strength in the proofs against me; if by your Lordship's judgments springing from unknown motives, if for any reasons or necessity of state, of the wisdom and justice of which I am no competent judge, your Lordships shall proceed to pass this bill against me, I shall dispose myself quietly and tacitly to submit to what you do. God's will be done: naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; and

whether he gives or takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord !”

Thus concluded a speech of two hours' length, and when the Bishop returned to his prison, his party hoped it might so lessen the number of his opponents, that it would open a chance of his escape. Perhaps had a division immediately occurred, it might have done something for him ; but when the subject was again brought forward, the House heard counsel in reply ; a violent debate ensued, when the opposition after struggling for three days to save him, found their strength inadequate ; a majority of eighty-three to forty-three pronounced Bishop Atterbury guilty of high treason, deprived him of his benefices, declared him incapable of exercising any office or enjoying any dignity within the King's dominions ; and sentenced him to exile for life, with the additional provision that any of his countrymen who ventured to hold communication with him abroad should be pronounced felons without benefit of clergy.

Bishop Atterbury shortly afterwards embarked for France in company with his favourite daughter Mrs. Morrice, and attended to the place of embarkation by an eager throng of fellow coun-

trymen, determined to shew him every respect. We need only add that he soon found cause to regret having strayed theology to politics, and to feel the truth of all that his shrewd friend, the Duchess of Marlborough, had said on the subject of the conspiracy in which he had so foolishly committed himself.

CHAPTER X.

A TRIPLE DUEL.

This sword I think I was telling you of, Mr. Sharper. This sword I'll maintain to be the best divine, anatomist, lawyer, or casuist in Europe ; it shall decide a controversy, or split a cause.

CONCERN.

HANDSOME Hervey as has been already related, when about to be introduced by the Princess of Wales to her favourite Maid of Honour, assumed to be reluctant, and could scarcely be prevailed upon to offer himself to her as a partner ; but the beau was a privileged person, whose insolences were so much matters of course, that even the Princess felt disposed to tolerate them. It is an inexplicable mystery, the influence men of this

description acquire, which allows of their exercising a despotism no other tyranny ever approached.

Handsome Hervey in whatever related to fashion and breeding had become a dictator, whose sway was undisputed over both sexes; and the sense of his power made him indifferent to the opinions and even feelings of those around him, to a degree which sometimes possessed an extravagance quite ludicrous. In this way he said and did with impunity what no other man could hazard, without the expectation of being called to a severe account. This most effeminate of men was regarded with too much admiration for criticism; he laid down laws, he proposed changes, he pronounced judgments, and all obeyed as though he were at once an oracle and a deity.

One half of his extravagances proceeded from a love of singularity, that led him to speak as no one else spoke, and to act as no one else ventured to act; and while attending on the Princess to seek the young lady her Royal Highness seemed so disposed to recommend to his favour, he thought only of what extraordinary things he should do and say to her that should most excite her astonishment; for he felt assured she must be some

raw girl, whose ignorance was ready to betray itself at every thing she beheld.

But a most perfect revolution shortly made itself manifest in his opinions, which notwithstanding he for some time strenuously endeavoured to conceal from himself, produced some very singular effects in his conduct. He was too much alive to impressions from the graceful and refined, to observe unmoved the extremely elegant performance of his new acquaintance in the Minuet they danced together. Nevertheless, he kept up his usual indifference of manner—he was still cold, sententious, and supercilious; he was polite to his partner after his fashion, but his courtesy was frigid, and his attentions formal.

Handsome Hervey strove with himself to be as careless with respect to the young Maid of Honour as he had been with a hundred other pretty women, to whom he had found it necessary to extend the valuable favour of his temporary notice; but though he imposed upon others, he did not impose upon himself. Sleeping or waking, absent or present, he seemed to have ever before his eyes the form of the Brigadier's daughter, with all her inimitable grace floating along in the elegant evolutions of the Minuet de la Cour.

The matchless performance he never forgot ; it haunted him wherever he went. He thought of it, talked of it, dreamt of it. That intolerable lassitude which made him shun every kind of exertion till he found an ordinary observation too fatiguing to attempt, vanished entirely immediately he recalled to his recollection the lovely figure that had so completely charmed his senses. At other times he continued to drawl out two or three syllables to which he was obliged to give utterance, with a listless vacant air, as though he knew not what was required of him, and contrived when in company to say something peculiarly pertinent in extraordinary brief sentences, that kept up his reputation as a wit.

The beau tried to struggle against the fascination that had begun to exercise its influence over him. It is true he did not fly from the young lady, but though frequently in her company he kept as much aloof as possible, and apparently was quite oblivious of her presence. This, however, was but a deception. He was deeply engaged in making use of every sense that could bear to him any evidence of her actual existence. He treasured every word, he stored up every look, and though he rarely took even the slightest

share in the conversation that was going on around him, he was sure to carry away with him a lively remembrance of her portion of it.

In this way he became acquainted with the whole force and direction of her romantic sentiments, and no sooner did he understand how entirely her character was influenced by them, than he took measures to turn his knowledge to account. He sent for Jacob Tonson, and gave orders to be supplied with every romance of any celebrity that was procurable. The result was, Jacob and the boy in yellow smalls were diligently occupied for several days in bearing to his Lordship's lodgings the voluminous works he required.

Thus furnished, the beau whose dislike of fatigue had always been carried to a height that was truly ludicrous, shut himself up, gave out that he had left town that he might be free from interruption, and devoted himself to a most severe course of study, which ran through the vast collection that encumbered his floor. It required the strength of a Hercules to get through such a task; nevertheless, Handsome Hervey, the most effeminate of dandies, persisted till he found he was as thoroughly master of the subject as the

fascinating enthusiast who had induced him to pay attention to it.

He had never ventured on making the young beauty acquainted with the influence her charms had exerted over him; indeed so far from it he had, as we have said, kept himself in the back ground, as though not caring for her notice, or desirous of escaping it. On one occasion had there existed any suspicion of his sentiments in the Court circle, he would have betrayed himself. This was the poetical rivalry that was so remarkable a feature in the Arcadian scene got up at Hampton Court under the auspices of the Princess of Wales. The theme of his poem was the beautiful Maid of Honour; but Handsome Hervey had been so cautious of betraying the state of his feelings that no one suspected how near was the fair subject of his verses.

He had again nearly betrayed himself when he heard the news of Mary Lepel's extraordinary disappearance while proceeding to Petersham. He was in a most restless state during the whole of the time she remained in the power of Baron Bothmar; but as nothing worthy of credit could be heard respecting her, he continued in an exceedingly ill frame of mind, not knowing whether

she had eloped, according to the common report, or had been carried off, which had more than once been hinted at.

Handsome Hervey suffered extremely during this period. He seemed to his fellow promenaders at the Ring quite a different person. He looked spiritless and melancholy, and appeared in all his usual haunts with a grave and anxious air, as different as possible to the intense sense of satisfaction that had previously been so prominent in his singularly effeminate features. His friends fancied he was seriously indisposed. Suddenly there came news of Mary Lopez's return, and as suddenly the invalid became again as indifferent and contented as ever. Some remarks were made on Handsome Hervey's rapid improvement; but so little was he suspected of entertaining a preference for the young favourite of the Court, that no one suggested the true cause of it.

The attempted abduction of the Maid of Honour on the day of the Arcadian party, also excited him extremely; yet he contrived to conceal, during the confusion, the peculiar interest he felt in the matter. But on the memorable occasion when it was discovered that the fair huntress had disappeared during the hunt with the royal

buck hounds, he displayed an extent of sympathy that ought to have betrayed him. His inquiries, his remarks, his suggestions astonished his associates. The listless, apathetic, almost silent beau underwent a complete transformation, for which they could not account. This continued till he had obtained information of the place of her confinement, when he lost not a moment in proceeding to her father.

At this time it so happened that Brigadier General Lepel was with his regiment at a distance of nearly two hundred miles; but as the distracted beau made his errand known at Peter-sham, John Coachman and Pompey volunteered to accompany him for the purpose of assisting in procuring their young mistress's liberation. They soon transported themselves to the neighbourhood of the Duke of Wharton's handsome seat, and as rapidly as possible opened a communication with the fair prisoner, and commenced a negociation with Mrs. Kitty to help their project, as has elsewhere been stated. This, however, was not done so secretly but that the clever myrmidons of the Dukes of Somerset and Buckingham, who were lurking in the neighbourhood, obtained a knowledge of it, and the indefatigable

Captain Spatterdash and Jack Wildair were instantly in communication with their principals who, determined to leave no effort untried to secure their object, posted to the scene of action, so that they might be able to take immediate advantage of any circumstances in their favour.

They observed the preparations making for the escape of the captive, and much more secretly made their own. They ascertained the night of the projected elopement, and one quite unknown to the other, as he believed, determined to carry her off directly she made her appearance outside the walls. The Duke of Somerset was lurking beneath her window when he beheld the ladder of ropes thrown out. How he profited by that circumstance the reader is aware; but unfortunately for his reputation as a gallant, his long watching and great anxiety overpowered him, and his Grace, forgetting he was not enjoying his usual nap guarded by his faithful watchers, became guilty of that offence against good breeding which had so completely damaged his character with his fair companion.

The Duke of Buckingham's plan to intercept the fugitive had nearly succeeded in consequence of her having availed herself of the rope ladder

a little before the time appointed for the true Sylvanus to be at the spot; but as we have shown, he was not more fortunate than his rival. He endeavoured to divert his chagrin at his failure by abusing his useful acquaintance Captain Spatterdash, whom he cashiered, much to that worthy gentleman's dissatisfaction, and then made the best of his way to town.

The Duke of Somerset was still more incensed at his discomfiture. His proud spirit could not endure failure. He was in a towering passion, and discharged his footman, discharged his coachman, and discharged his postillion; and lastly discharged his sagacious and faithful assistant Jack Wildair, vowing he would abandon gallantry, as being too laborious a pursuit for a nobleman of his great influence and dignity.

He also returned to town, but had not long reached the family mansion when a letter was placed in his hands, which on opening he read as follows :

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sentiment of profound respect, I have the honour to remain,

“ My Lord Duke,

“ Your Grace’s most obedient, humble servant,

“ HERVEY.

“ To his Grace,

The Duke of Somerset.”

The perusal of this missive, courteously as it was worded, threw the haughty Duke into a tempest of pride and indignation. He affected to be amazed at the fellow’s presumption in challenging so great a man:—indeed, at first he was disposed to treat the whole affair with contempt; thinking it would be best to get rid of the presumptuous challenger, by sending to him any of those bold fellows about town, who for a moderate recompense would pistol or poniard, according to agreement; but a few minutes’ reflection assured him that to such a person as the son of the Earl of Bristol he could not refuse the treatment of a gentleman; and after calling in his friend, Philip Dormer, he thought proper to reply to the note as haughty an acquiescence, as it was possible for him to express.

A similar letter was sent by the beau to the Duke of Buckingham; but he received it in a very

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Wimbledon Common of a hundred and twenty years ago. Hostile meetings were frequent; the parties in such affairs coming with their seconds, and some attended by a throng of friends; and, the small sword being the chosen weapon, thrusting at each other till one was wounded, or by the loss of his sword, prevented from continuing the conflict. Sometimes these meetings ended fatally; but such a catastrophe luckily, did not occur often.

It was on a fine morning, in the spring of the year 1720, that two gentlemen were seen there, evidently waiting for some person or persons. There was a marked contrast between them:—a tall, thin figure, wrapped in an old campaign coat, a pair of extremely lean legs, cased in high military boots; the most undeniable lantern jaws, surmounted by a capacious duvillers, or full bottomed wig, with a little beaver fiercely cocked at top, gave evidence of the presence of the Earl of Peterborough; and in the extremely refined appearance and handsome suit, the delicate features and elegant figure of his companion, there could be no difficulty in recognising Handsome Hervey.

“Zounds! *camerado*!” exclaimed the Earl,

"your friends are not over punctual. They are not fellows to mount a bastion at the first burst of daylight; or lead a troop in the grey of the morn to surprise a village. Which of the two do you intend carving first; eh, my little fighting cock?"

"Why, I expect the Duke of Somerset will be first at the rendezvous, my dear Lord," replied Handsome Hervey.

"What, old black mumble!" he exclaimed. "Odds, culverins! you'll have a pretty opponent; whom if you don't mistake for old Scratch himself, it will not be the fault of his worship's ugly mug. And he's as proud as Lucifer too; and always cock-a-hoop on the subject of his own dignity. Well, my Hector of Troy, if you don't drill a hole through his body big enough to let in a little common sense, you won't be a doing him a good action, that's all."

"Perhaps, he may be inclined to doubt that would be doing him a benefit," said the baron, smiling.

"'Sdeath man! Let him doubt, and be hanged," answered Lord Peterborough. "If the fellow can't be convinced of his good fortune when so important a service is done him, he deserves to

have his ears slit. Then the next comer is Buckingham," he presently added, "Garbage, my Lord—garbage, a fellow whose stomach is like a whirlpool—it sucks in everything within its influence. A little blood-letting would do him good, Hervey—a deal of good. He is getting towards the end of his pilgrimage. His sand must be nearly run out. Breathe a vein for him, Camerado, if you love me. It will reduce the excessive heat of his constitution, and keep him chaste, in spite of himself. Blood-letting is a monstrous fine remedy. I've known it administered in some pretty serious cases with extraordinary success."

"I fancy your Lordship must have been the practitioner, and Spain the country of the patient," observed Handsome Hervey.

"Yes, my little desperado, there may have been something of that sort," replied the other. "Like Jack Ketch I may say I have done justice on many."

"The Duke of Wharton has the reputation of being a good swordsman, I think," said Handsome Hervey.

"Has he, Camerado? then the more honour for you," replied his friend. "It would have taken a dozen such swordsmen to have made one

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Duke had been telling his second. The principals saluted each other courteously, and so did the seconds. Handsome Hervey as usual studiously elegant, with all the air of a Narcissus; Buckingham free and jocular, as though coming to meet a pleasant companion; Lowther with the languishing grace that had been so fatal to the peace of the unfortunate Sophy Howe; and Lord Peterborough bluff and hearty like a General at parade.

"Gentlemen, no offence," said he, "but we have waited for some time for the pleasure of your company."

"Egad, I thought so!" exclaimed the Duke with a laugh, that shook his pendant cheeks like a pair of jelly bags; "but Lowther spied the prettiest black-eyed creature as we came along, and by Jove, I couldn't for the life of me resist following her to learn where she might be met with."

"Oh, a lady of course is sufficient excuse for anything," replied the Earl; "but now, Lowther, let us proceed to business. You, of course, are aware that the worthy gentleman for whom I appear in this business advances pretensions to the beautiful Mary Lepel, which makes him regard the late proceedings of his Grace of Buck-

ingham as an affront to him no man of honour could put up with. This, as I take it, is a legitimate cause of quarrel. By the God of war, Sir, I have known many a tall fellow run through the body without having given half such provocation."

"We do not deny that there is good and sufficient cause of quarrel," replied Anthony Lowther, "my Lord Duke is here to meet my Lord Hervey, and grant him the satisfaction he desires."

"Devilish proper proceeding on his part," resumed Lord Peterborough; "but his Grace of course is aware that the vanquished in this contest must give up now and for ever all claim to the lady, should he be allowed to escape with life."

"That is understood."

"Well then let's measure their Ferraras, and then set our cocks in their proper positions."

The weapons were compared, which were small swords such as were usually employed in duels. No material difference in length was perceptible; they were given by their seconds to the combatants, who were placed before each other, and then the seconds retired to a convenient distance.

Handsome Hervey gracefully bowed to his antagonist, and courteously bade him commence the attack, which his Grace presently did in a rather spirited manner. He had had some little experience in such affairs—the natural result of his offences against husbands and lovers; indeed he was not at all ill pleased in his old age to be again engaged in one. But it was soon seen that he now wanted many requisites for a successful duellist; the gout in one of his legs, a scantiness of breath, and indifferent sight, almost incapacitated him from taking part in such a contest.

The beau however effeminate in appearance, excelled in manly accomplishments, and the small sword he had practised from boyhood. He was soon made aware how completely his antagonist was at his mercy; but he allowed him to labour as hard as he liked in making the most furious thrusts, and in jumping about with an activity quite extraordinary for his years. Presently, however, symptoms began to shew themselves of the Duke's failing wind, and then Lord Hervey commenced pressing him hard. The perspiration rolled down the Duke's pendulous cheeks in large drops as he defended himself; but it was evident to the seconds that he had not a

chance, and they advanced to witness the catastrophe they knew to be impending.

Handsome Hervey, however, to their astonishment, did not wound his antagonist, though there could be no doubt he might easily have done so, but continued to press him closer and closer till the Duke, panting and blowing like an overdriven ox, after a wild attempt to keep up a defence, sunk down on the grass from sheer exhaustion. His opponent immediately raised him from the ground in the most polite way imaginable; but though his Grace was free from wounds, it was evident he was not in a state to renew the contest. In a few faint words he acknowledged his defeat; but for some time he continued to look more dead than alive, and could scarcely stand without support. His constitution had so suffered by his excesses that he was in no condition to endure the violent exercise he had been forced into adopting.

He was, however, slowly regaining his wonted composure when the Duke of Somerset, accompanied by Philip Dormer, and followed by a stranger who was a surgeon, made their appearance. The Duke was, if possible, a thousand times more haughty than ever; his gloomy visage looking as though he considered he was degrading the ill-

trious house of Somerset in granting a meeting to an adversary beneath him in rank. A slight inclination was all the acknowledgment he deigned to make to the courteous salutation of his antagonist; and whilst his second was arranging the preliminaries with the Earl of Peterborough, his Grace coolly took snuff, without according any farther notice of the person with whom he was so soon to be engaged in mortal strife.

The ceremonies were soon gone through, and the proud Somerset and Handsome Hervey were presently crossing their bright weapons with steady hands and determined looks. The lover of the Brigadier's daughter soon found he had a very different antagonist to the last. The Duke was a wary old swordsman, and what he wanted in strength he made up in cunning.

"The old fellow holds himself well, Dormer!" exclaimed the Earl of Peterborough. "I protest I did not give his wrinkles credit for retaining so much of the fire of youth."

The Duke overheard this, and was inexpressibly disgusted that the head of the great house of Somerset should be designated by the vulgar name of "old fellow;" he, however, was too experienced a hand to allow his indignation to interfere

with his swordsmanship. He went steadily to work, thrusting and parrying with considerable deliberation and some skill. Great, however, was his astonishment, not unmixed with mortification, when he found his sword in some unaccountable manner jerked out of his hand. He stood disarmed, looking extremely indignant at what he chose to think a very unpardonable act.

“Suffer me to present your Grace with your weapon,” said Handsome Hervey, with a graceful bow presenting the handle of the fugitive sword to its owner. The Duke of Somerset looked as if he thought he ought to be exceedingly angry; and, as if he considered Lord Hervey to be taking a great liberty, he took back his weapon with an extremely ill grace, muttering some unintelligible words about “accident,” as his opponent, with another inimitable bow, fell back.

Presently they set to work again, the Duke particularly careful that he would not part with his weapon so easily, in a hurry. Alas! the Duke, great man as he was, speedily experienced the truth of the proverb “Man proposes but God disposes.” On a sudden away flew the unfaithful steel, and the Duke stood unarmed before his young antagonist, looking a thousand times more dissatisfied, and more disconcerted than before.

"A million pardons!" exclaimed the beau, again restoring his sword. "I hope your Grace will excuse my little inadvertence." The Duke looked like a sulky school-boy receiving a reprimand. He seemed to think it derogatory to the blood of the Somersets to receive such attentions, and was inclined to attribute no small degree of presumption on the person who had the bad taste to thrust his obligations on the last Duke of that distinguished family. He, however, ultimately thought better of it, and ventured to renew the contest.

The seconds appeared not a little amused at this repetition, and the surgeon and the Duke of Buckingham evidently thought it equally entertaining; but their smiles at last turned to irrepressible laughter on observing the same incident occur again.

The Duke of Somerset had for some time been extremely ill at ease; he began to suspect that he was placed in a very unbecoming position; but when he heard that he had become an object of ridicule—he, Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, laughed at!—he looked the concentration of scorn and indignation. With a gesture intended to be dignified he sheathed his sword, haughtily intimating



1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or goal. This involves understanding the current situation and what needs to be achieved.

2. Next, it is important to gather relevant information and data. This can be done through research, interviews, or other methods.

3. Once the information is gathered, the next step is to analyze it. This involves looking for patterns, trends, and insights that can help inform the decision-making process.

4. After analysis, the next step is to develop a plan or strategy. This involves determining the best course of action to achieve the goal.

5. The final step is to implement the plan. This involves putting the strategy into action and monitoring progress along the way.

ment and finished elegance of Handsome Hervey, as in an easy attitude he awaited the unsteady approach of the most formidable of his rivals. For while Buckingham and Somerset had long passed the vigorous season of life, the Duke of Wharton was but just entering upon it, and enjoyed the reputation of being well skilled in the small sword.

"Could the peerless Mary Lepel fancy a man so brutal in his appearance?" thought the Beau. "Could she, who doated on the unapproachable perfections of a Prince Oroondates, reconcile herself to so besotted, so slovenly, so degraded a creature, as this Philip, Duke of Wharton, has made himself!"

"Hullo, old cock!" cried the young Duke of Wharton, as he stumbled against the Duke of Somerset. "Zounds!" he exclaimed, as that nobleman proudly turned away, "your Grace looks as melancholy as a sick monkey. Egad, if I hadn't known you, I should have taken you for the mummy of one of the Pharoahs that had left the Pyramids on an excursion of pleasure. Upon my life, at beholding so venerable a visage, one feels devilishly inclined to ask after Joseph and Potiphar's wife!"

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venerable old geese for their presumption regarding the fair Lepel. Deucedly provoking it was, her escape ; especially after I had taken such pains to get possession of her. But I'm not going to give up so lovely a woman without a fight. Come on, my first of Maccaronis ! Come on, my prince of fine gentlemen ! Come on, my king of beaus. Now for the destruction of that delicate waistcoat ; now for the marring of that matchless coat. Mourn, ye tailors, for your glory is about to depart !"

With these words the Duke of Wharton made a fierce attack on his rival. Handsome Hervey defended himself with not less spirit ; but he soon found he had a very different antagonist than either of the two venerable noblemen he had so readily vanquished. He was hard pressed ; but the resources of his skill were great, and the young Duke's impetuosity was not attended with sufficient caution.

The vanquished parties in the duel, and their seconds, approached in no slight anxiety to witness the result of the contest. Handsome Hervey rested satisfied with defending himself till an opportunity presented itself of employing some clever trick of fence. It came much sooner than

his rash opponent could have anticipated. The Duke went pressing on, thrusting with a rapidity that, with a less skilful defence would have soon rendered his opponent harmless ; but when he fancied he had an advantage, the other made a vigorous jerk with his weapon, and the next minute the Duke stood with nothing but his sword-hilt in his hand ; the blade had been broken short off, and lay at some distance on the grass.

“ May ten thousand devils torture the thief of a cutler who sold me that weapon !” exclaimed he, flinging the hilt on the ground. “ Needs must when the devil drives ; eh, Hervey ? So I give up the fair Lepel. Cursedly provoking, though !”

“ May I never do an ill turn—”

“ Ah !” shouted Lord Peterborough, coming forward menacingly. “ Who gave that Cock and Bottle rascal leave to speak amongst gentlemen ?”

“ Stab my vitals, I think his Grace hath made choice of a very unworthy second,” remarked Philip Dormer.

“ Unworthy, Sir !” exclaimed Captain Spatterdash, with much virtuous indignation. “ My

friend, the Duke of Buckingham, can vouch for my gentility."

"*I* knave?" cried that nobleman sharply, "I never stand up for what I know never existed. I vow I would sooner vouch for the gentility of a foot-pad."

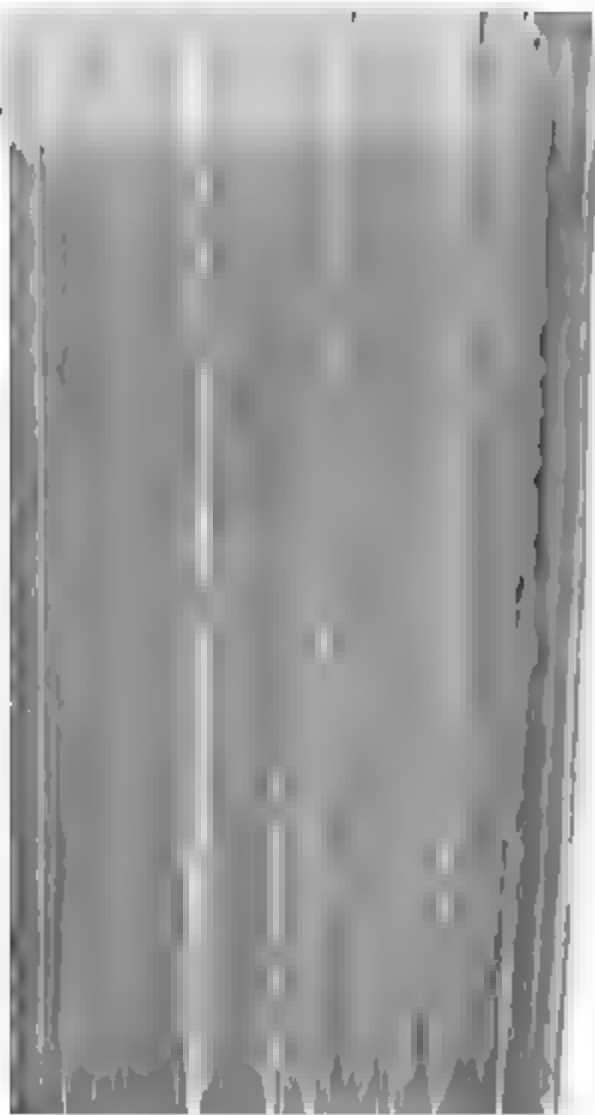
"May I never do an ill turn—" began the discomfited Captain, with an appealing look to his last patron.

"Nay, noble Captain, I cannot help thee!" exclaimed the Duke of Wharton; "nor do I think I would if I could. For I shrewdly suspect thou art as great a rogue as ever dangled on Tyburn tree."

Lord Peterborough drew his sword, and so did Philip Dormer, and one or two others who thought there might be good sport in frightening the fellow; but Captain Spatterdash had for the last few minutes had a retreat in contemplation, and was edging away from the company, when, on the hostile demonstration just made, it appeared high time for a start, and he began to run towards Bloomsbury.

He was closely pursued however, and overtaken. As Handsome Hervey was departing from

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bourhood.



CHAPTER XI.

RIVAL CIVILITIES.

Good morrow, good captain—I'll wait on you down—
You shan't stir a foot—you'll think me a clown—
For all the world, captain, not half an inch farther—
You must be obeyed—your servant, Sir Arthur.

SWIFT.

BRIGADIER GENERAL LEPEL sat in the breakfast room at Petersham Manor, his campaign-coat and horseman's boots plainly enough denoting he was preparing for a ride; an inference sanctioned by the riding-whip, gloves, and cocked-hat that lay at hand upon the table near him. Nevertheless, the Brigadier, as he sat back in his heavy arm-chair, appeared too much engaged in his reflections to entertain any immediate idea of taking the air. He seemed completely to have given himself up to his own thoughts and speculations;

and that they were missing. No one who beheld the smile of self-satisfaction that had evidently been stamped upon his features, could fail to remark it.

Round the walls of his apartment the several representations of himself seemed to reflect, as it were, that exulting complacency, that untroubled exultation, and that elevated approval, which were so conspicuous in the countenance of the worthy general. The Ensign smirked, the Captain smiled, the Major ogled, the Colonel winked, and the General chuckled, as if to prove to himself that the well-satisfied gentleman in uniform was himself.

Time had dealt very leniently with the British hero. We had presented him to the reader as an inveterate dandy, certainly; but there was freshness about his antiquity that was quite refreshing as the bloom and plumpness of youth. He wore his wrinkles with the air of Narcissus, and crows-feet in him seemed features which Apollo himself might have been proud to possess. It was sufficiently evident that Brigadier-General Lepel was a remarkably handsome man. This by the way he knew as well as everybody. Perhaps he would not have called him-

old ; he might even hesitate in considering himself middle-aged ; nevertheless, it is equally true, a good many years had passed since he was young.

The Brigadier was absorbed in one of those day dreams which not unfrequently visit sanguine people on particular good terms with themselves—people connected in any way with Courts, and ambitious of obtaining distinction by their own merit are above all persons liable to be visited by such visions, and the Brigadier had long been in the habit of indulging himself in this way. The fact was, he had returned from a service in which he had been sent by the Minister, which had kept him in a distant part of the island for several months past, to find his daughter the subject of every one's conversation, and the proceedings of her rival suitors the theme of every one's commentary.

The old beau, in simple truth, was as delighted as man could be, on learning the exalted rank of several of her admirers, and the pertinacity with which they had pursued her with their affectionate attentions. He was a courtier born and bred, with whom rank, like charity, covered a multitude of sins ; indeed his reverence for it was so

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he found no such obstacle in the way of the realization of his ambitious wishes for his daughter, and he was calculating on having the Duke for a son-in-law, and on the increase of influence at Court he might obtain through such a connection, when we introduced him to the reader a page or two back.

He was in the midst of a particularly pleasant scene at Court, in which he shone more brilliantly than he had done even when enjoying the countenance of his illustrious patroness the Great Duchess, when the door opened, and the dusky features of Pompey were thrust into the apartment, ornamented with one of his most irresistible grins, as he announced Lord John Hervey; and in a few seconds the graceful figure and effeminate countenance of Handsome Hervey, set off by an admirable new wig and a matchless suit of embroidered sky blue velvet, with his rare clouded cane in one hand and his cocked hat gracefully carried in the other, were observed just at the entrance. He was in the act of making a bow, the elegance of which would have been a fortune to a dancing master.

The Brigadier rose from his seat. He was a connoisseur in every thing connected with the in-

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twenty or thirty years is far from conferring that superiority to the bow it gives to some other things.

The proprietor of Petersham Manor happened, however, to enjoy that felicitous opinion of himself which admits of no humiliating acknowledgments, and when he beheld the bow of his visitor and regarded his appearance, he rose as though he felt himself provoked to an encounter in an art in which he was well satisfied he had no rival; and as he recovered his perpendicular immediately after his own performance of the ceremony that had seemed to challenge his superiority, the winning smile that irradiated his well preserved features told plainer than any language, that the sense of security in which he had been allowed to live so long was not in the slightest degree disturbed.

Handsome Hervey seemed as if inclined to place the question of rivalry beyond dispute, for when the well bred host had finished his act of recognition of his well bred visitor, the latter advanced two steps, with a management of both cane and hat that must have made the most sanguine beau despair, and perpetrated a second bow. Never was any ceremony so exquisitely performed; never had the human figure been known

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presenting the beau of Queen Mary, the other the beau of a new school, or rather a new generation destined to eclipse its predecessors in the united sciences of conduct and compliment. It was the velvet suit of the one with its silver buttons and gold buckles, compared to the campaign coat and buckskins of the other with much less valuable decorations. But the Brigadier would not have been true to his own nature had he for a moment doubted the supereminence of those accomplishments to which he owed so many obligations, and fully satisfied with the favourable impression he fancied he had created, he at once proceeded to the additional courtesy of offering his visitor a chair.

Handsome Hervey lost no time in availing himself of this civility, and as readily as gracefully followed the action of his host, by drawing a chair to a place, where they could most conveniently sit together. But here a new contest arose. Each stood by his chair, erect yet easy in his carriage, smiling with winning affability, and waiting for the other to be seated. The host pointed to the vacant chair; his visitor courteously acknowledged the civility, and with eloquent pantomime signified that he waited for the example of his senior. The Brigadier pressed, but Handsome

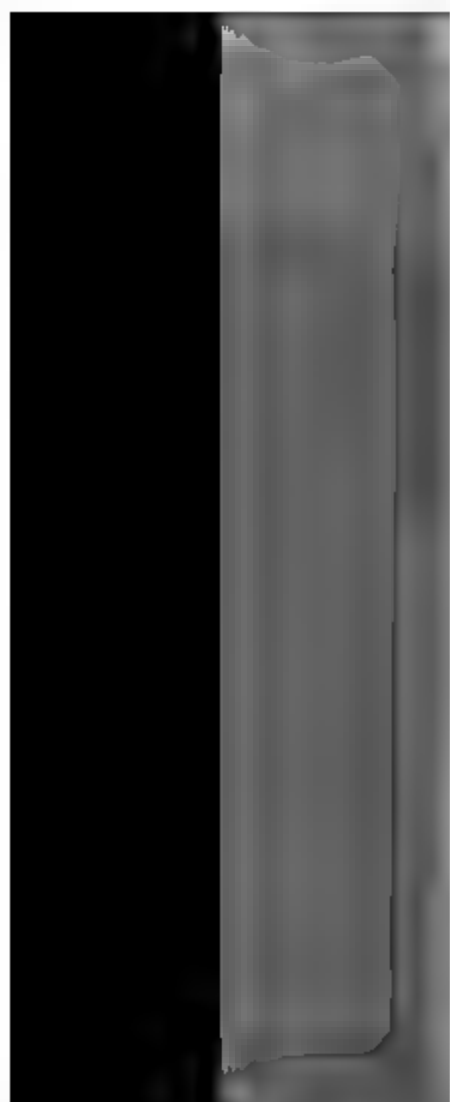
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of the other's consideration for Madam Lepel and himself; but such formed the preliminaries only to the real business of the interview. It was merely the skirmishing leading to a general engagement.

After a sufficiency of this kind of conversation, Handsome Hervey found it advisable to enter upon the purport of his visit. He began by lauding the character of the Brigadier, and by dilating on the gratification that any right minded person must feel, in the idea of being connected with a family so distinguished; and then proceeded to mention the rare merits of his daughter, and to describe the feelings he had experienced ever since he had had the honour of being numbered amongst her acquaintance. The beau's language was extremely well chosen, and his complimentary allusions were made in words evidently carefully and well selected; but as soon as Mary Lepel became his theme, his ideas were absolutely eloquent, and his sentences would have done honour to a Demosthenes.

He acquainted her father with the rise and progress of his passion: how her incomparable beauty and inimitable grace first dazzled him at the State Ball, during their mutual performance of the



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word or two, that wonderfully helped his looks in expressing his grateful appreciation of the compliment that had been paid him. Saving this, the proud and happy father heard him uninterruptedly to the end. He then proceeded to reply.

The Brigadier began by referring to the very high honour he must consider had just been done him, by the proposal he had just heard from a member of one of the noblest families in the kingdom, and assured the candidate for his daughter's affections, that had he looked carefully around him for a son-in-law, he could not have selected a nobleman in every way so desirable as his present associate. He then alluded to his daughter, and to the gratification she could not but enjoy in her having attracted towards her, one who seemed so well qualified to confer honour on her judgment. He reiterated what he had already said as to the high sense he entertained of the services for which they were so deeply indebted to him, and paid his Lordship an abundance of well turned compliments on his gallantry, prudence, and address.

Nothing seemed more plain than the intense

satisfaction of the Brigadier at the prospect of having for a son-in-law, his extremely well dressed and extremely well bred companion. The secret appeared beaming out of his smiling physiognomy, and oozing out of the train of elegant compliments that so liberally garnished his conversation. Unfortunately however for this inference the tone of his voice now greatly altered ; and he began lamenting that circumstances, over which he had no control, circumstances the most aggravating that could be conceived, should prevent his following his inclinations and obtaining a son-in-law so completely to his satisfaction. But he stated most sententially and with a very lively display of sympathy, that trials of this vexatious nature were the common lot of man, and that the anxious father could not be expected to escape them any more than hundreds of meritorious individuals whose happiness they were continually marring. Then he added a great deal more, expressive of his grief at being obliged to give up a proposal so flattering ; and wound up the whole with his conviction that a person of Lord John Hervey's merit, would be sure to attach himself to a family of a station at least as exalted as his

own. Finally, the Brigadier presented his snuff box with an air that had been deemed so irresistible by the great Duchess.

Handsome Hervey may have deeply felt the rejection of his suit—for a rejection he knew it was, despite of all its delusive flourishes; nevertheless, his breeding would not allow him to betray his feelings, and he heard his fate pronounced with exactly the same quiet dignity that had marked his demeanour on his entrance. He helped himself from the proffered box, and as gracefully deposited the powder in his nostrils as if he was eminently contented with the intimation that had been given him. The gentlemen then sneezed and blew their noses, and the manner in which each performed this difficult achievement was a study for a painter.

The art of handing a snuff box and of helping yourself to its contents might be acquired by any ordinary beau; but the art of sneezing and blowing your nose was only thoroughly learned by the great masters of gentility. A curious contrast was observable in the styles in which these two finished gentlemen went through this trying experiment. There was a classic purity in the simplicity which characterised the performance

of the Brigadier, and a rich romance in that of his handsome associate. Each possessed merit; if Brigadier Lepel sneezed like a heathen divinity, Handsome Hervey blew his nose like a hero of the Crusades.

There was a great triumph of breeding over feeling in the last proceeding of the visitor at Petersham Manor; which was made more apparent in the wonderfully polite speech in which he expressed his regrets that an obstacle so serious should have intervened between the realisation of the ambitious wish he had ventured to express, and in his assurances that the young lady would meet with an abundance of suitors in every way more desirable for her, as an alliance with so distinguished a character as Brigadier-General Lepel must be eagerly sought by the highest families in the kingdom.

Handsome Hervey concluded a most eloquent eulogy on the Brigadier and his incomparable daughter by rising from his chair, and offering his snuff-box. The manœuvre was one which no other man in the dominions of his Britannic Majesty could have effected with half the ease, or a tithe of the eloquence the Brigadier's visitor so conspicuously displayed. The latter sought to

rival it, as he rose and accepted the proffered courtesy; but his vanity must have been great, indeed—as it undoubtedly was—if he supposed he made more than a very slight approach towards it.

The two beaux again appeared as rivals in a very peculiar and delicate accomplishment; and though Handsome Hervey was at the time enduring the greatest indignity that a man of sensibility could suffer:—in being placed in the position of a rejected suitor—his unrivalled genius was never so conspicuously displayed, as in his elegant disposal of hat and stick in one hand, as he raised the other charged with ‘right Spanish’ to his nostrils;—with just that elevation of elbow, and curve of arm, which is the perfection of elegance in the arrangement of the principal members of the human form divine.

Nor must we forget his smile which seemed the most perfect mingling of refinement, satisfaction, and amiability; and this remained unchanged in its happy expression whilst he gave utterance to his unfeigned regret at being obliged to leave society so extremely agreeable to him. Of course his host pressed the stay of his visitor; and seemed greatly concerned at the idea of parting

with him. But the crowning act of this admirable ceremonial was the matchless style in which Handsome Hervey made his adieus, and performed his parting bow. The Brigadier bowed in unison; but his was merely a clever piece of courtesy:—his companion's was an inimitable work of art, which would at once and for ever have established his superiority in every drawing-room in the three kingdoms.

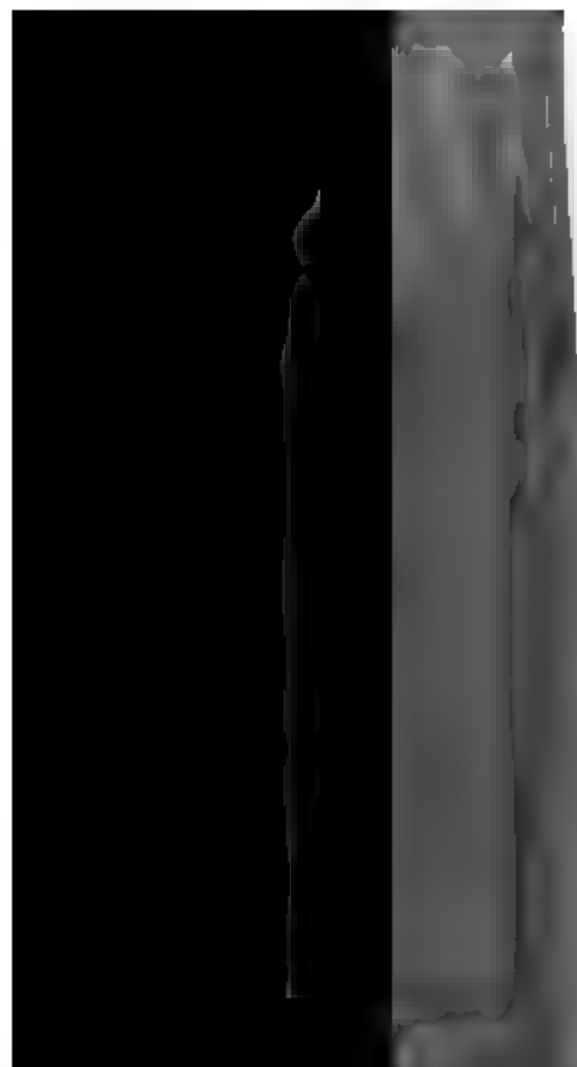
It is very possible that when Brigadier-General Lepel allowed his visitor to leave Petersham Manor, he believed that what had passed during the interview was known only to themselves. He was never more mistaken in his life. The reader should be informed that Mrs. Kitty had returned to her young mistress's service, as soon as she had been expelled from that of the Duke of Wharton, for having assisted in the escape of his fair prisoner; and that in this service she shewed herself as active and intelligent as any waiting-woman in the world.

The whole of the period in which the Brigadier and his visitor were together, she took care to possess the most correct information of what passed between them, through the convenient medium of the neighbouring key-hole. As soon

as she had obtained all the particulars respecting the interesting communication of her young lady's lover, and its unsatisfactory result, she lost no time in causing her mistress to be as well informed as herself.

Mary Lepel had thought a good deal of her very singular acquaintance with the handsome beau, whose effeminacy had once been so amusing to her, but whose extraordinary courage and intelligence, she had so lately had an opportunity of appreciating. His participation in her escape from the Duke of Wharton's house entitled him to her warmest gratitude; but the display he had afforded her of his extensive scholarship in the species of literature in which she so greatly delighted, and the gratification she had derived from it, left an impression on her heart of which so handsome and agreeable an associate might easily have taken advantage. In her mind he certainly more nearly approached Prince Oroondates than any person she had ever known; and when she heard the dexterity and courage he had since exhibited behind Montagu House—on her account too—his similarity to that distinguished individual seemed still more clearly established.

She was just considering the necessity there



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uch a husband as he in his superior wisdom should think proper to select for her; rather sharply inquiring how such a child could know anything of such matters; and then he broke out into a most imposing oration, such as he was wont to deliver when standing up for the interests of Old Sarum in his seat in Parliament, on the strong necessity there existed for the young and inexperienced being guided by their seniors in matters so important to their own happiness.

Mary Lepel listened to every word in the attitude she had been taught by the careful Penelope Stiffandatern to attend to the communications of parents and guardians; but as soon as her father had done speaking, to his extreme surprise, she gave him to understand that however he was entitled to her duty, in matters of love it was well known every heroine was allowed to choose for herself; and as she had already bestowed her affections on a gentleman in every way calculated to do honour to her choice, it was quite unreasonable to expect she could entertain the pretensions of any other suitor.

As this was expressed in language worthy of Statira herself, the Brigadier's astonishment may easily be imagined. But his was not a nature to



"Zounds, Madam!" cried the Brigadier, getting more and more oblivious of his long established reputation for elegance. "Zounds, Madam, do you presume to oppose my wishes? But I'll soon tame this spirit! I'll lock you up, Madam—I'll keep you on bread and water—I'll prevent your seeing any one, or hearing from any one—I'll—"

"You cannot prevent, Sir, my thinking of any one," replied his daughter in the same quiet tone; "therefore whatever else you may do will be useless."

"'Sdeath Madam, but we'll see!" shouted the angry Brigadier as he left the room, and, all idea of civility forgot—banged the door after him.

Mary Lepel was alone, and a prisoner.

CHAPTER XII.

OUR HEROINE'S LAST ADVENTURE.

So well I'm known at Court,
None ask where Cupid dwells,
But readily resort,
To Bellenden's or Lepel's.

GAY.

HANDSOME HERVEY, when he left Petersham Manor, had no idea of giving up the pursuit of its fair mistress, notwithstanding the little respect in which his pretensions appeared to be regarded by her father. The rejection he had been forced to endure, to him seemed so marvellous, that he felt inclined to doubt the Brigadier's sanity;—besides it was a thing which might do his reputation incalculable injury were it known. There was, however, he thought, one great consolation. No one in his senses could believe that so superlatively

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the young man was equally cautious; he was careful to keep his name in favour among the anti-slavery. The women were of course in the most favourable opinion of the Brigadier's conduct. Mrs. Smith, whenever she was awake, would always express her opinion in favour of the man: she said that Mrs. Smith as plainly as possible, and it was known she wouldn't be so with any other man. All the hard-hearted men in the town were. Pompey did not expect to be successful unless they escaped him in the night, and when he perpetrated whenever he could see under discussion. John Cook had been speaking and gave every one to understand that he was in the situation of his young man, he would slip his hand, and bolt on the

the next day before the rejected suitor could communicate with the garrison, and the next day he was everything relating to the matter. His next step was to communicate with the young man: and this, with their assistance, he succeeded in doing, despite the vigilance of the Brigadier.

It was necessary something should be done, as it was known that the Brigadier had received a visit

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and when I will seek you: there willst thou ever find me. He was not long in making his way to the street door under the window of the room in which he had been directed, and finding a few pieces of light gravel against the door he entered with all a lover's eagerness for the result of his quest.

The door had soon caught the sound of an unusual commotion, notwithstanding it was pushed in by the pressure of a door as that of Mrs. Kitty—another minute he received the end of a rope—another minute the well known figure of his mistress, heavily loaded and cloaked, was descending resembling its friendly spokes—another minute and he felt the quick beating of her heart as he caught her in his arms.

"It is I, my love," exclaimed the enraptured lover in a thrilling whisper, "a life devoted to serving your happiness is the only return I can make for the bliss of this moment."

"Could a reward be more ample?" asked the enraptured heroine in the same low tone. "But let it suffice that I am yours for ever. No earthly power can now divide us."

"Not so fast, mistress!" exclaimed a stern voice: and to the consternation of the lovers the

figure of the Brigadier emerged from the shadow in which he had been concealed, and stood before them.

What a dreadful interruption was this to the dream of happiness into which the sensitive and romantic Mary Lepel had momentarily fallen. It came so sudden and was so heavy a blow that it appeared to produce a stunning effect upon all her faculties. Her lover mechanically put his hand to his sword, but the recognition of the parent of his beloved as he observed three men in the Lepel livery approaching from the neighbouring trees, who were the butler and his two fellow servants, quickly convinced him of the folly and uselessness of resistance.

“Perhaps my Lord Hervey will do me the honour to accompany me,” said the Brigadier in his most stately manner. “I must show your Lordship before we part, how Brigadier General Lepel treats the man who seeks to rob him of his daughter.”

The beau bowed as if he had received some extraordinary favour, and readily followed the incensed father, as he, taking the arm of his unresisting daughter, proceeded to the house door. Poor Mary Lepel! She bent her steps mechani-



so unexpected a scene. He stood with his hat in his hand the very picture of one who had ignorantly intruded into a scene where he was not wanted. But Mary Lepel at once divined the dreadful meaning of all these gay preparations—the hateful marriage with which she had been threatened was about to take place. A well known voice now roused her from her unhappy reflections.

“Oh, mine tear Matam Lepel, vot von liddel vool you is looking!” exclaimed the Prince of Wales with a hearty laugh as he approached her. “I am gome to gompliment you, and mine vife is gome, and your goot vriend the Duchess of Marlborough is gome, and Villip Dormer is gome, and Gurnel Argyle is gome, and his abhominable pride Mary Pellenden that vas, is gome, and ve is all gome to gompliment you on your marriage, mine little tear.”

The Princess now stepped forward, and, to the increasing astonishment of her half alarmed, half confused Maid of Honour, her Royal Highness, not without visible agitation, took her hand and placed it in that of her lover. No one dreamed of the great sacrifice she was making, for the handsome beau had made an impression on her heart,



“For my part,” observed Fanny Meadows in a whisper to the Duchess of Bolton, “I think all this fuss about marriage extremely improper.”

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The Wits thronged towards the young couple, every one with some jest worthy of the occa-

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“Zounds, Madam!” cried the Brigadier, getting more and more oblivious of his long established reputation for elegance. “Zounds, Madam, do you presume to oppose my wishes? But I’ll soon tame this spirit! I’ll lock you up, Madam—I’ll keep you on bread and water—I’ll prevent your seeing any one, or hearing from any one—I’ll—”

“You cannot prevent, Sir, my thinking of any one,” replied his daughter in the same quiet tone; “therefore whatever else you may do will be useless.”

“’Sdeath Madam, but we’ll see!” shouted the angry Brigadier as he left the room, and, all idea of civility forgot—banged the door after him.

Mary Lepel was alone, and a prisoner.

CHAPTER XII.

OUR HEROINE'S LAST ADVENTURE.

So well I'm known at Court,
None ask where Cupid dwells,
But readily resort,
To Bellenden's or Lepel's.

GAY.

HANDSOME HERVEY, when he left Petersham Manor, had no idea of giving up the pursuit of its fair mistress, notwithstanding the little respect in which his pretensions appeared to be regarded by her father. The rejection he had been forced to endure, to him seemed so marvellous, that he felt inclined to doubt the Brigadier's sanity ;—besides it was a thing which might do his reputation incalculable injury were it known. There was, however, he thought, one great consolation. No one in his senses could believe that so superlatively

handsome, and elegant a man, could have had such an indignity passed upon him.

He knew well enough, and none knew better, how many of the highest families in the kingdom were eagerly desirous of being connected with a gentleman of such unquestionable breeding. It therefore became incumbent on him to appeal to higher authority on the subject, and seek the counsel of the young lady herself. To his great astonishment and mortification, he found himself not only debarred access to her, but prevented holding the slightest communication with her. He soon learned she was a prisoner, and became fully aware of the obstacles he was likely to meet with, should he still endeavour to continue his suit. Nevertheless he did endeavour.

The serious misunderstanding between their young Madam and their master, was of course well known to all the establishment, and excited much discussion and no slight degree of interest below stairs. Rackstraw, the respectable butler, was reserved and dignified. He rarely trusted himself to speak on the subject; and when obliged to do so, exhibited a diplomatic ambiguousness that might have served as a model to all respectable butlers placed in similar delicate positions. Sandie

the Scotch gardener was equally cautious; but such conduct found very little favour amongst their fellow-servants. The women were of course loud in their animadversions upon the Brigadier's tyranny. Mrs. Molly, whenever she was awake, becoming extremely energetic in favour of the rights of woman; and Mrs. Kitty as plainly and decidedly allowed it to be known she wouldn't put up with such usage for all the hard hearted fathers in the 'varsal world. Pompey did not express his sentiments, unless they escaped him in the eloquent grins which he perpetrated whenever the subject was under discussion. John Coachman was indignant, and gave every one to understand that were he in the situation of his young mistress, he should slip his halter, and bolt on the first opportunity.

It was not long before the rejected suitor established communication with the garrison, and was made aware of everything relating to the prisoner. His next step was to communicate with the young lady; and this, with their assistance, he succeeded in doing, despite the vigilance of the Brigadier.

It was necessary something should be done, as he learned that the Brigadier had received a visit

from his fair friend the great Duchess; that they had had a long conversation, which, though intended to be confidential, had in a great measure been betrayed through the agency of the keyhole, and that Mrs. Kitty was positive she had heard the Duchess recommend an immediate marriage. This alarming intelligence was confirmed to Mary Lepel by her father walking into her chamber and informing her, that he had resolved she should marry a gentleman he had selected—a highly desirable Duke in his dotage he had long had in his eye, and desiring her to prepare to meet his wishes in three days.

Nothing could equal the effect produced on all the parties most interested, by this despotic announcement. Our young heroine continually referred to the precedents established by other heroines under such very trying circumstances; for her only consideration was, would Cassandra, or Clelia, or any of her romantic acquaintances, have submitted to such a disposal of themselves. This question she soon learned to answer in the negative; and then came the important question, what was to be done to escape the hard fate designed for her?

The youthful Maid of Honour felt by this time

in attendance on the handsome Bea her father disapproved it as sincere as her conviction that he was the complete far-seeing and living representative of the illustrious Prince Oroondates of her princely realm: and was fully disposed to do justice to the ability and moral worth that existed under his direction of intense consequence. In him, however, and his service served to excite in the most powerful manner the deep feeling of devotion which had taken the place of the admiration her father and herself. Such were therefore as much in love with each other as they thought it was possible for them to be: and did not fail to avail themselves of every opportunity presented to them of expressing each other know the fervour of their attachment.

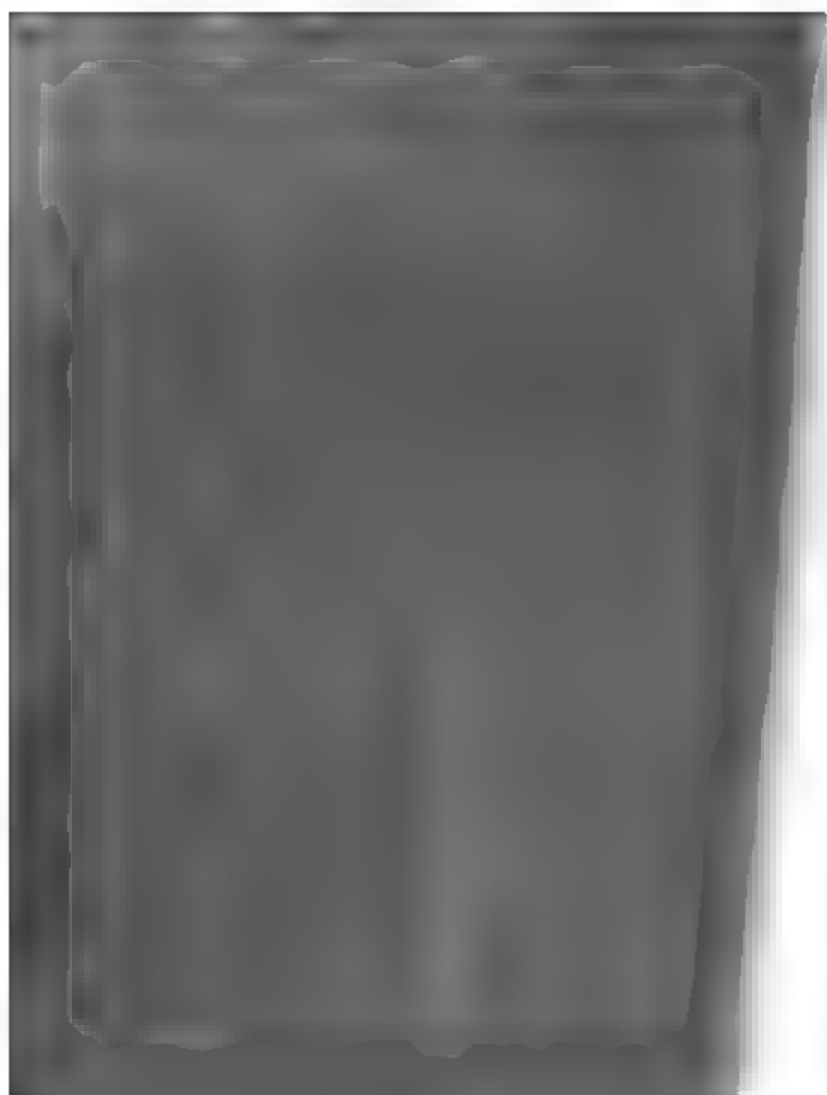
The King appeared to be in a restless state of vigilance. He put in force every precaution which the most sagacious fathers could have employed upon their consequence daughters. He was constantly on the watch to baffle any designs from without: he was indefatigable in his efforts to restrain any intrigues from within. Nevertheless, the lovers communicated not only every day, but almost every hour of the day; and the device they had recourse to, to conceal their

correspondence, spoke as strongly in favour of their ingenuity as of their discretion.

It was very remarkable that all at once the party below stairs ceased to discuss the position of their young mistress. Rackstraw, the respectable butler, never allowed her name to pass his lips; and his prudence was copied by the Scotch gardener, and the tall footman, all of whom, the other party were well aware were employed by their master as spies upon her. The women were equally reserved—Mrs. Molly never opening her mouth except during her customary slumbers, and Mrs. Kitty assuming all the appearance of one who had entirely lost the use of the organs of speech.

John Coachman was evidently under great restraint. Taciturnity was not one of his virtues; from his intense desire to control his somewhat too pliant tongue, he smoked his pipe with his mouth screwed up as tightly as if it bore a padlock. Pompey, however, still continued his grin; indeed, he seemed bent on practising the art more industriously than ever.

There could be no doubt that there were two parties below stairs—one in the interest of the master, and the other in that of his daughter;



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We must beg leave to pass over a variety of little details that showed the extreme vigilance of the two parties into which the inmates of Peter-sham Manor were divided, and request the reader's company to a midnight watch outside the house. The night was as fine as myriads of stars could make it; there was no moon, but still there was sufficient light to enable any one possessed of tolerable good eyesight to see what he was about. Apparently every one in the Brigadier's mansion had retired to rest, for not a sound arose from it, and the only noise that disturbed the quiet of the scene was caused by the plaintive sighing of the wind among the tall trees that grew close to the house.

It was a little after twelve when a chariot, with four evidently very superior horses, was seen slowly creeping along the lane by the garden wall. It stopped, and a gentleman stepped cautiously out of the carriage. At the same moment the figure of a man was observed stealthily creeping from the shadow of the wall. A very few words passed between them in a low voice. The gentleman was Handsome Hervey; the other person was John Coachman. They proceeded together to the garden door that led out into the lane; the

man opened it, and kept guard there whilst the lover entered the garden. He was not long in making his way to the exact spot under the window of his mistress to which he had been directed, and flinging a few grains of light gravel against the panes, he waited with all a lover's anxiety for the result of his signal.

His quick ear soon caught the sound of an opening casement, notwithstanding it was pushed up by so practised a hand as that of Mrs. Kitty—another minute he received the end of a rope ladder—another minute, the well known figure of his mistress, closely hooded and cloaked, was fearlessly descending its friendly spokes—another minute and he felt the quick beating of her heart as he clasped her in his arms.

“Oh my beloved!” exclaimed the enraptured lover in a thrilling whisper, “a life devoted to securing your happiness is the only return I can make for the bliss of this moment.”

“Could a reward be more ample?” asked the enamoured heroine in the same low tone. “But let it suffice that I am yours for ever. No earthly power can now divide us.”

“Not so fast, mistress!” exclaimed a stern voice; and to the consternation of the lovers the

figure of the Brigadier emerged from the shadow in which he had been concealed, and stood before them.

What a dreadful interruption was this to the dream of happiness into which the sensitive and romantic Mary Lepel had momentarily fallen. It came so sudden and was so heavy a blow that it appeared to produce a stunning effect upon all her faculties. Her lover mechanically put his hand to his sword, but the recognition of the parent of his beloved as he observed three men in the Lepel livery approaching from the neighbouring trees, who were the butler and his two fellow servants, quickly convinced him of the folly and uselessness of resistance.

"Perhaps my Lord Hervey will do me the honour to accompany me," said the Brigadier in his most stately manner. "I must show your Lordship before we part, how Brigadier General Lepel treats the man who seeks to rob him of his daughter."

The beau bowed as if he had received some extraordinary favour, and readily followed the incensed father, as he, taking the arm of his unresisting daughter, proceeded to the house door. Poor Mary Lepel! She bent her steps mechani-

1. The first step is to identify the problem or goal. This involves understanding the current situation and what needs to be achieved.

[illegible]

so unexpected a scene. He stood with his hat in his hand the very picture of one who had ignorantly intruded into a scene where he was not wanted. But Mary Lepel at once divined the dreadful meaning of all these gay preparations—the hateful marriage with which she had been threatened was about to take place. A well known voice now roused her from her unhappy reflections.

“Oh, mine tear Matam Lepel, vot von liddel vool you is looking!” exclaimed the Prince of Wales with a hearty laugh as he approached her. “I am gome to gompliment you, and mine vife is gome, and your goot vriend the Duchess of Marlborough is gome, and Villip Dormer is gome, and Gurnel Argyle is gome, and his abhominable pride Mary Pellenden that vas, is gome, and ve is all gome to gompliment you on your marriage, mine little tear.”

The Princess now stepped forward, and, to the increasing astonishment of her half alarmed, half confused Maid of Honour, her Royal Highness, not without visible agitation, took her hand and placed it in that of her lover. No one dreamed of the great sacrifice she was making, for the handsome beau had made an impression on her heart,

which though she could not destroy, she could guard against, and in conjunction with the Duchess of Marlborough, she had prevailed on the Brigadier to sanction the marriage of his daughter, which ceremony, on his discovering the proposed elopement, he had arranged should take place the same evening in the presence of the friends of the bride and bridegroom.

“You ought to be shamed of yourself,” said the Prince, addressing Handsome Hervey, “to be running away with Molly Lepel, when Dormer is dying for her, Peterborough is sighing for her, the Dukes of Somerset and Buckingham are trying for her, and myself and everybody else is crying for her ready to break our hearts. Oh you little zly rogue!” he added, turning to Mary Lepel. “You are a thousand times more blague than profit to us all. I shall banish you as I mean to banish that rogue Madam Bellenden for running away with Gurnel Argyle, the first time I catch her in the dark.”

“*Ma foi !*” exclaimed that young lady in her usual gay manner, “Your Royal Highness should have availed yourself of the opportunity I allowed you when I kept you so completely in the dark respecting my marriage.”

“For my part,” observed Fanny Meadows in a whisper to the Duchess of Bolton, “I think all this fuss about marriage extremely improper.”

“Arrah now, honey, what ails ye?” exclaimed the Duchess, loud enough to attract general attention. “What is it you know about it improper? Faith now, I’m thinking may be some day or other, ye’ll be afther finding marriage not only proper, but mighty convanient.”

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sion :—Philip Dormer, the Earl of Peterborough, the Dukes of Kingston, Somerset, and Buckingham, Mr. Secretary Craggs, ay, even the Duke of Wharton, with the easiest assurance in the world, came forward to express his felicitations. Handsome Hervey, as soon as his first surprise was over, received the courtesies of his friends with an air worthy of his great reputation ; and the Maid of Honour, as her attention was directed towards him, felt perfectly satisfied that Prince Oroondates himself, in such a situation could not have appeared to greater advantage.

They were married ; and all the poets, and all the wits about town rushed into print to celebrate their nuptials. Philip Dormer forgot his rivalry in a long congratulatory copy of verses, of which we can here only find room for the following :—

Bright Venus yet never saw bedded,
So perfect a beau and a belle ;
As when Hervey, the Handsome, was wedded,
To the beautiful Molly Lepel.

Of the writer, we have only to add, that he pursued his career at Court with a success worthy of his great abilities ; that he married the daughter of the Duchess of Kendal, and succeeding to the

title of Earl of Chesterfield, became known as the author of a work bearing his name, that has ever since been esteemed a text book on the study of gentility.

The eccentric Earl of Peterborough continued for many years to amaze the town with his extravagances:—one of the last being his marriage with a public singer—the beautiful Anastasia Robinson, whom he espoused when somewhere about midway between his seventieth and eightieth year. The profligate Duke of Wharton, after exhausting all the resources of the most reckless dissipation, embraced the cause of the Pretender; became a scandal and a wonder wherever he appeared, and ultimately turned devotee. From the presidential seat of the Hell Fire Club, to the cell of a recluse; from the imperial throne of the Mohocks, to the self-denying example of a brotherhood of monks, was a change so extraordinary, as to be almost incredible. Nevertheless, the licentious, the reckless, the infamous Duke of Wharton, died in the habit of the Monks of St. Bernard, and was buried as a brother of the order in the Church of Poblet.

We must pass over many of the inferior cha-

racters in this story, as their after histories presented no remarkable feature worthy of chronicling. Of the Maids of Honour, the prudish Fanny Meadows remained a prude to the end of her life; a great part of which she enjoyed the character of an old maid, and supported it with singular ability. The imprudent Sophy Howe, we regret to say, met with a fate still more deplorable:—she discovered too late, the deception that had been practised upon her, and finding that nothing was to be expected from an appeal to the honour of her seducer, she pined away overwhelmed with a sense of misery and shame, and in a very few years died of a broken heart.

The wife of Colonel Argyle had frequent cause of congratulating herself on the convincing proof she had given of her inaccessibility to the arguments of a Prince, though they had taken so sterling a shape. Her indecorous treatment of a royal cocked hat often amused her in after years, when the duties of a matron filled her mind, to the exclusion of all those accomplishments which she had once so highly prized as the result of her “finishing” in France.

Lastly, our heroine, the favourite Maid of Honour, became as universally appreciated as a wife and a mother, as she had been admired as a beauty. But some how or other she contrived in a very short time after her marriage to divest her mind of all those romantic impressions which had found place there. Her favourite heroines faded from her memory, as her affection for her husband increased; and even the much quoted Prince Oroondates was forgotten before her first infant was a month old. As the wife of a nobleman so distinguished as Lord John Hervey, she held a brilliant position in society, where her beauty long remained a theme worthy the genius of the first poets of the age, inspiring even the muse of a Voltaire.

Of Lord Hervey we have only to add that he continued to be remarkable for many effeminate affectations, which drew upon him the satire of Pope, who under the names of "Sporus" and "Lord Fanny" thought proper to hold him up to public ridicule; but Lord Hervey possessed literary talents, which made him almost a match for "the wicked wasp of Twickenham," and replied to the attack in lines, which if not as vigorous as

those of his vindictive adversary, were quite as caustic. He was also a patron of literature, and in that light Dr. Myddleton addressed to him the dedication of his "Life of Cicero."

We had nearly forgotten two or three individuals whose influence, if not their merit, requires that we should not dismiss them without a few words at parting. We, of course, allude to George I. and his extremely unpropitious mistresses. The years that had passed had not brought peace to the disturbed mind of that Hanoverian sovereign—quite otherwise, he was still frequently in open hostility with his son, and the Princess had the misfortune also to excite his ill feelings. Every succeeding year found him in a state of greater restlessness, haunted by an undefinable dread of evil, which sometimes took the shape of an apprehension of his fair prisoner escaping, and sometimes of her dying. Both contingencies in his conception being equally dreadful; for in the first he saw nothing but civil war and bloodshed; and in the second he fancied he foresaw certain death; for it subsequently transpired that many years since, some person possessed of considerable reputation in the oc-

cult sciences had prophesied that the King's death would follow within a year of that of his Consort ; and notwithstanding the severity of his treatment of that unfortunate Princess, the slightest rumour of her being indisposed filled him with the most intense alarm. As he grew older, the immediate probability of such a catastrophe grew stronger, and coupled with the deep remorse he experienced for the injustice he had done her, his fears became so predominant that he existed in a state of nervous irritability of the most pitiable description.

Some seven years after the date of the marriage of our hero and heroine, those charming favourites the Schulenburg and the Kielmansegge were sitting together one quiet evening in the apartments in the palace, in which they had so long been domiciled ; the former uglier and thinner than ever, and more than ever devoted to abstruse homilies and prolonged sermons ; the latter uglier and fatter than ever, and more than ever devoted to her favourite black bottle of Schiedam, which on the present occasion failed not to fill its accustomed place.

"It is my only comfort your Highness," exclaimed the Countess of Darlington pathetically,

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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• Use a few more words

the King, looking wildly around, "yet I was awake in my cabinet, sitting alone, when suddenly I saw—"

The King stopped, a spasm of horror seemed to seize his frame, his knees shook violently, his face was colourless, and his eyes fixed.

"Baron Bothmar!" cried the groom of the chambers. The door was opened, and in a dress soiled with travel, and, evidently greatly fatigued and excited, the Baron hastily advanced into the apartment. He stopped before the King, who started up at the announcement of his name, and with open mouth and staring eye-balls glared at his visitor, as though he regarded his appearance there as an indication of evil tidings he dared not ask and dreaded to learn.

"Sire," said the Baron, in a low voice, "she is dead!"

The intelligence fell upon the King like a thunderbolt; he dropped down in a swoon with a sharp cry of mingled horror and anguish. He was presently carried to his own chamber, and the best medical attendance was soon in requisition; but for a considerable time the skill of the physicians was of little avail. The patient raved

in a manner that astonished as much as it alarmed his attendants; sometimes denouncing his own conduct as that of a brutal tyrant persecuting an innocent woman, sometimes rambling about a prophecy that seemed pregnant to him with mystery and death.

In the course of a few months, by the unremitting attention of his physicians, he was so far recovered as to be able to travel; and he commanded preparations to be made as expeditiously as possible for a journey to Hanover. His impatience to reach the Electorate became so great, that it was feared his disorder would return. It was in vain his ministers strove to direct his attention to the pressing affairs of the kingdom; he would attend to nothing, he could attend to nothing save his journey to Hanover. His excitement on this subject became extraordinary, and his countenance assumed a wildness of expression that startled the courtiers.

The King set off for Hanover, accompanied by the Princess of Eberstein; but on their landing in Holland they shortly afterwards were forced to separate, and the King had to continue his journey alone. He was evidently under no common ex-

citement; some strange impulse appeared to be directing him forward; he looked wildly and muttered unintelligibly, and was uneasy and anxious to an extent that excited much alarm in his suite.

He was absorbed in the reflections of remorse, calling before his mind the sufferings that, during an unjust imprisonment of no less than thirty-two years, he had caused his lovely and accomplished wife, the hapless Princess Sophia Dorothea, to endure. Though convinced of her innocence of the charges her relentless enemies had brought against her, he was so completely the slave of his mistresses, as to be afraid to act upon those convictions; and now the full extent of his own wicked life represented itself before him in the revolting colours that belonged to it. He groaned in spirit—the goadings of remorse seemed to make him writhe like a trodden worm.

Suddenly a hand was protruded through the window of the chariot in which the King was proceeding at full speed, and a letter was presented to him. He did not see the messenger, he had not heard him; he had been absorbed in his own dreadful thoughts, and had neither eyes nor ears

for external objects. The King eagerly seized the packet with a nervous clutch, and the hand disappeared. The letter was directed to him, and sealed with a black seal. His limbs trembled, and his hands shook so, he could scarcely retain his hold of the paper, as, on recognising the hand-writing, he tore it open. He read as follows :

“I, Sophia Dorothea of Zelle, true and lawful wife of George Lewis, King of England and Elector of Hanover, do hereby summon you, the said George Lewis, to appear to answer for all the crimes, wrongs, insults and indignities, heaped upon the said Sophia Dorothea, heretofore the faithful wife, and the fond mother of your children, whilst you gave yourself up to all kinds of profligacy, folly and wickedness, and abide the verdict of the great and just Judge, in his eternal Court, on the 11th day of the month of June, in the year of our Lord 1727.

“From my death-bed, in my prison in the Castle of Ahlden, in the 32nd year of my imprisonment.

“SOPHIA DOROTHEA.”

As the King read the last words of this awful citation, the paper fell from his grasp; his eye became glassy, a stroke of paralysis contorted his features—he gasped, he clutched at the air—his tongue protruded from his mouth; his head fell back against the carriage; and when the horses were stopped at the next stage, and the attendants came to the door of the chariot, they found him a corpse.

Thus, according to a trustworthy account, ended the career of the first of our Hanoverian sovereigns; following his hapless Consort in a period so brief, that in the minds of the superstitious there could be no question about the accomplishment of the prophecy which had given him so much uneasiness. Of course, the decease of their patron was the dispersion of his particularly ugly harem; for his successor had too lively a sense of the obligations he was under to “der anterderloovian grockodiles” to allow them any longer to disgrace the palace.

Of the Prince we need only say, that his first regal act, was the seizure of his father’s will, and its immediate destruction. Notwithstanding the ill omen of such a proceeding

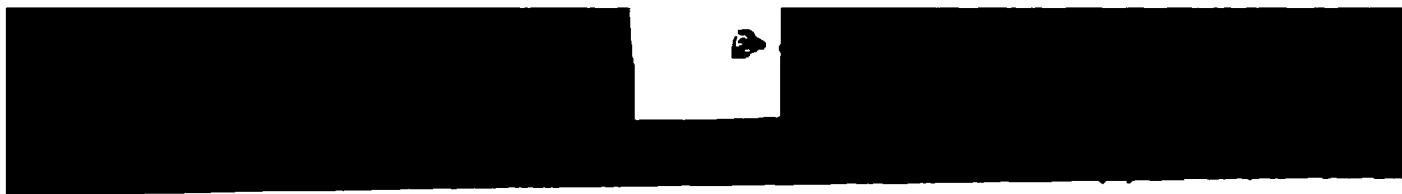
at the commencement of his reign, George II. showed himself a man more respectable character than his predecessor. Fortunately for him, however, he allowed his clever and amiable Consort to exercise considerable influence over him: and as long as she lived, he was respected. One of the first acts of Queen Caroline was to summon her late favourite Maid of Honour, Lady Hervey, and place her in a highly honourable position about her person, whilst her husband was appointed to an equally honourable post in the service of the King.

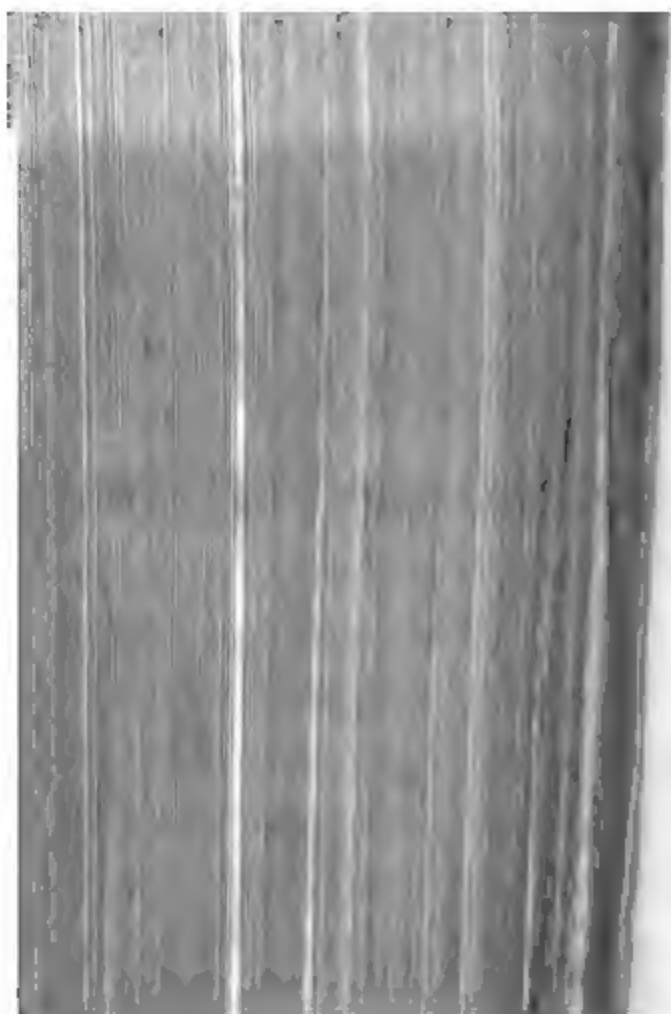
THE END.

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